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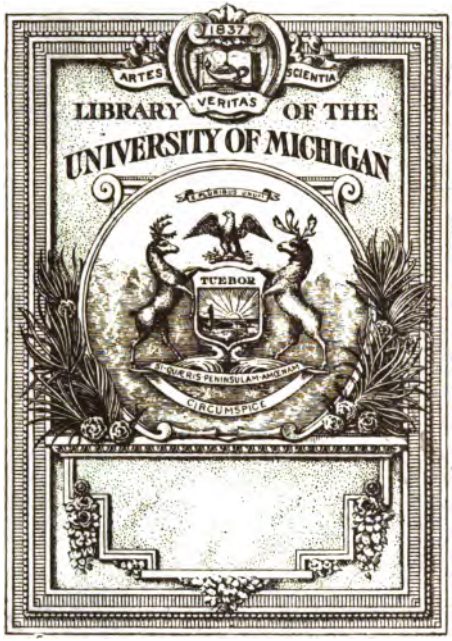
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THE

WORKS

OF

THOMAS SECKER, LL.D.

LATE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

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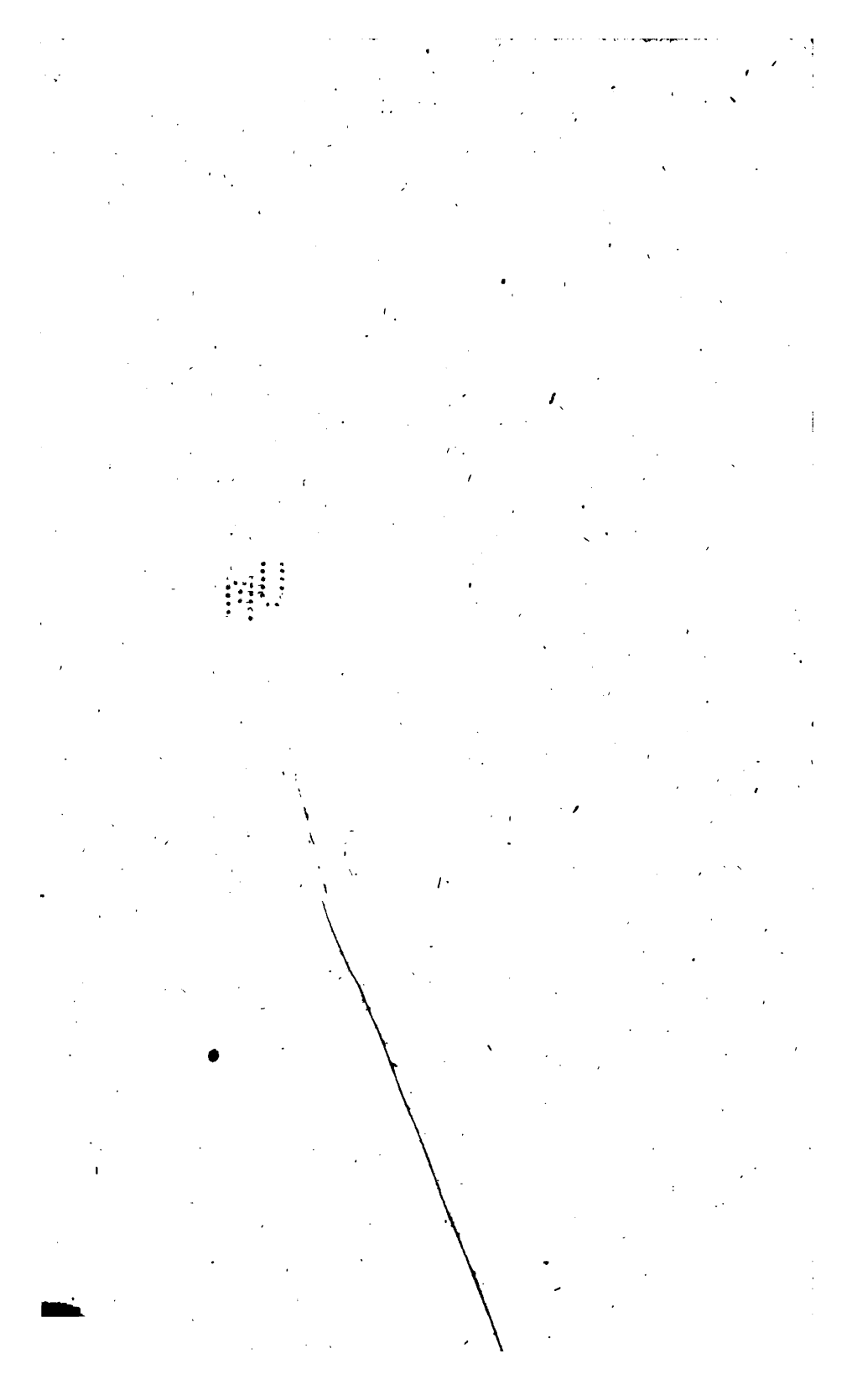

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SERMON CXXXVII.

THE PERNICIOUS EFFECTS TO A NATION OF IGNORANCE AND IDLENESS; AND THE HAPPY CONSEQUENCES OF KNOWLEDGE AND INDUSTRY.

Preached before the Society correſponding with the Incorporated Society in Dublin, for promoting Engliſh Proteſtant Working-Schools in Ireland, at their general meeting in the pariſh church of St Mary le Bow, on Wedneſday, April 27. 1757.

PROV. ix. 6.

Forſake the fooliſh, and live; and go in the way of underſtanding.

THESE are the words of Wiſdom herſelf, ſpeaking in perſon: and to ſpeak them with effect to the poor of our neighbouring iſland, that *forſaking the follies* of their anceſtors, they may live as men ought; *and go in the way of underſtanding*, through the practice of the duties, and enjoyment of the comforts of this world, to the happineſs of the next, is the whole intent of the charity, which we are met to promote: the nobleſt and greateſt of the kind, that ever exiſted.

The kingdom of Ireland is bleſſed by Providence with all the means of proſperity: and yet the bulk of the people are in a condition very lamentable. With health and ſtrength, they have little or no induſtry; with capacities like other men, they have little or no knowledge, even of the common arts of life. With the beſt ſituation and opportunities for commerce, they have ſcarce any of the conveniencies which it imports: with a fertile ſoil, in a temperate climate, they have ſcarce food and raiment. Under a government, which lays on them the feweſt burthens, that perhaps ever nation felt, they are inceſſantly wiſhing for a change: and, which is the ſource of all, tho' the light of the reformation ſhines round them, and the door

of Chriſtian freedom is open to them, they continue in thick darkneſs, voluntary ſlaves to abſurd ſuperſtitions. Attached with ſervile awe to the loweſt emiſſaries of the See of Rome, they imbibe even the dregs of its errors: which many, in other countries of the ſame communion, have the wiſdom to reject. Hence their idolatry is groſſer, their eſteem of ſocial duties leſs, their dependence on outward formalities more confident, their enmity to Proteſtants bitterer: and their abhorrence of labour almoſt inſuperable, becauſe it will benefit thoſe whom they deteſt.

We ought to pity all the miſtakes and ſufferings of all our fellow-creatures, and yet more of our fellow-chriſtians, how much ſoever they proceed from their own faults. Even their temporal evils ought to move us very ſenſibly: and though penury and nakedneſs may appear to unaccuſtomed eyes more grievous than they are; yet the real diſtreſſes flowing from them are often extremely heavy. But their ſpiritual diſadvantages, that they have ſo little acquaintance with rational piety, univerſal benevolence, the value of moral ſelf-government, and the genuine ſyſtem of *the truth as it is in Jeſus**, theſe intitle them to much tenderer compaſſion, though ſeldom conſidered in that view. For our fellow-ſubjects we ought to feel an additional concern, were their intereſts ever ſo ſeparable from our own: but in the preſent caſe they are united moſt intimately. While theſe unhappy creatures remain without proper employment, the country in general muſt be unhealthy, as well as unpleaſant, for want of culture; and thinly peopled, for want of neceſſaries: the ſight of ſo much wretchedneſs muſt be painful; the relief of it expenſive, and nevertheleſs unavailing. That part of the Britiſh dominions muſt be deſtitute of the wealth and ſtrength, which diligence would quickly procure it: and inſtead of contributing to the ſupport of the whole, muſt drain and exhauſt England for its defence, whenever attacked.

This would be unavoidable, werethe natives ever ſo amicably diſpoſed towards us, ever ſo dutifully towards our ſovereign. But being of a different and perſecuting religion; taught by bigotted parents and inſtructors to regard us as heretics, abhorred of God; and devoted, by his vicegerent on earth, to preſent, as well as future, deſtruction: ſome of them will think doing miſchief to us, when they can without hazard, a laudable

* Eph. iv. 21.

laudable action; and others will imagine fraud, or perjury, or violence againſt ſuch abominable miſcreants, offences that claim an eaſy abſolution. Theſe ſentiments muſt greatly affect their conduct in the ordinary intercourſes of life: but unſpeakably more, when the intereſts of their church come in queſtion. Accordingly, for theſe, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, they were rebelling perpetually: in that of King Charles I. they maſſacred, unprovoked, as many compute, about one hundred thouſand perſons of our faith: in that of King James II. and the war that followed, not only the meaner ſort, but the upper alſo, gave ſhocking proofs of the like inhuman ſpirit. By ſuch repeated enormities, multitudes of them, on various occaſions, forfeited their eſtates with their lives. Theſe forfeitures, their deſcendants, whilſt they cheriſh the ſame way of thinking, muſt conſider as nullities; and wiſh and hope to regain what they have loſt; pining with envy, thirſting for revenge; and imputing their poverty, the fruit originally of their treaſons, and ſince of their idleneſs, and maintenance of prieſts without end, to our inſupportable oppreſſions.

Thus uneaſy at home, vaſt numbers of them go abroad, and chiefly into the territories of our enemies or rivals. There ſome of them exert themſelves in trade to our detriment, which they would not do in their own land for our common benefit. Some again, who have got riches already, carry them away to enjoy them elſewhere. But far the greateſt part of theſe emigrants take up the profeſſion of arms in the ſervice of popiſh powers; attack us with peculiar fierceneſs in the day of battle, as we have felt to our coſt; and are always ready, when a critical juncture ſhall appear, to return and head their countrymen againſt us in another meritorious holy war; which we have the more cauſe to apprehend, as their biſhops are nominated by the Pretender; as neither clergy nor laity amongſt them have ever given, or offered to give, though preſſed to it by ſome of their own church, any pledge of their fidelity to the preſent government; and as thoſe regions of the iſland, which they occupy the moſt entirely, are the neareſt to the continent *,

* We have been told indeed by a late Apologiſt for them *, that they have, for near 70 years paſt, that is, ever ſince they could not help themſelves,

* The caſe of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, Dublin, 1755.

We muſt be allowed therefore to recollect what hath been; and conclude from thence, what will, or may be; to put ourſelves, when it is requiſite, in the condition of our forefathers; adopt their feelings, to excite our vigilance, though not our reſentment;

ſelves, been perfectly well affected. But we can by no means truſt, againſt all probability, and the experience of ſucceſſive ages, to the bare word of a nameleſs author. And much leſs can we do it, when a contemporary author, an officer of his own nation and belief, living amongſt our enemies, where he may ſpeak out with ſafety and applauſe, treats our happy eſtabliſhment as an uſurpation; and frankly declares, that the Iriſh Papiſts have a ſettled antipathy to Engliſhmen, with a ſtrong attachment to France, and the Houſe of Stuart *.

We have alſo been told by the ſame Apologiſt and others, that whatever the Court of Rome may have done, the Church of Rome hath never patroniſed perſecution, or rebellion, or breach of oaths or promiſes, to introduce or ſupport its doctrine or diſcipline. But if we muſt be in danger of theſe things, whenever the Court of Rome, or its partiſans have power; it is but a ſorry conſolation to tell us, that the Church of Rome hath no hand in them. And yet whence are we to learn the tenets of that Church? Not ſurely from a few obſcure, or at beſt private writers: but from the decrees of her councils, general and particular, the uniform determinations of her Popes, the edicts of her princes †, the received opinions of her divines; the conſtant practice of her members, whenever an inviting opportunity preſents itſelf; and that practice not once condemned as unlawful, by any pretended authority amongſt them; though there have been many and loud calls upon them to condemn it, if indeed they diſapprove it. But they have better ways than this; they force the moſt notorious facts alledged againſt them, into a neutrality, if not into their ſervice, by miſrepreſentations; or, if any be intractably ſtubborn, they paſs it over in total ſilence. Thus particularly this Apologiſt, though he relates a variety of hiſtorical occurrences, to ſhow that his Catholic friends were innocent, or excuſable in them all, no more mentions or hints at the horrid butchery of 1641, than if he had never heard of any ſuch thing. And the Iriſh officer, poor man, hath forgotten it as entirely, in his narration of matters, relative to the Papiſts of that iſland: though he remembers a great deal more, than is true, of what preceded, and followed it. Treating perſons in this manner, is really holding their underſtandings in too much contempt; and being almoſt as void of judgment, as of honeſty and ſhame.

* Lettres d'un Officer Irlandois a un Officer Francois de ſes Amis, Mem. de Trev. Aout. Sept. 1756.

† See a diſcourſe concerning the laws, eccleſiaſtical and civil, made againſt heretics. London, printed for John Wyatt, 1723.

reſentment; and make ſupplemental proviſions for ſecurity, where the former have proved inſufficient.

How they came to be inſufficient, needs not be minutely examined here. Ireland, remote from the reſt of Europe, and haraſſed continually by domeſtic feuds, was in a ſtate of great ignorance and rudeneſs at the reformation. God, *whoſe judgements are unſearchable**, raiſed up then in that country none of the *burning and ſhining lights*†, which he did elſewhere. Popery therefore, while the attention of England was engaged at home, kept its ground, and ſoon fortified it by foreign ſchools and connexions. The firſt rebellions indeed, which followed on this, principally weakened the authors of them: but the dreadful maſſacre almoſt extinguiſhed the Proteſtants. And though the perpetrators of it ſuffered in their turns very ſeverely: yet the ſurvivors were buoyed up with hopes, in the two next reigns, of recovering all: which they were on the point of accompliſhing, when the arrival of our deliverer King William, and their unſucceſsful oppoſition to him, broke their ſtrength, but not their obſtinacy. However, ſince that time, the perſons of figure have been gradually coming over; ſome on right motives; others in conſequence of ſuch regulations, as the Legiſlature can juſtly make in its own defence, and Papiſts can never conſiſtently blame, though wrong minds may be tempted by them to hypocriſy. Still, proſelytes on ſuſpected inducements, and ſome of them only from the profeſſion of a falſe religion to the profeſſion of none, are not likely to have much influence, were they to endeavour it, on their inferiors: who accordingly have adhered to the Romiſh communion.

And were they never to quit it, their prieſts unqueſtionably, had they uprightneſs and prudence enough, might give them both better diſpoſitions to induſtry, and juſter notions of Chriſtianity. But there is no proſpect that they ever will, in any great meaſure; or ſhould they do their beſt, the moſt refined popery is a dangerous corruption of the goſpel; and hath beſides a large mixture of things hurtful to civil ſociety. But eſpecially where a perſon of the fame perſuaſion keeps up a claim to the Crown, its votaries will never be further good ſubjects, than as their ſeeming ſuch may procure connivance at

* Rom. xi. 33. † John v. 35.

at their making converts, to which they confeſs themſelves indiſpenſibly bound: and ſhould they ever make enow, there would be no peace afterwards, unleſs we and our king became what they would have us.

Therefore, till the generality of the Iriſh are brought to be proteſtants, the Engliſh are not ſafe. And doubtleſs they might have been brought to it, by gallies and inquiſitions, long ago. *But we have not ſo learned Chriſt* *. Our adverſaries can uſe every degree of force: yet proteſt, on occaſion, indeed at the very time and place, if it be needful, that they uſe none; and inveigh againſt us for ſanguinary laws, which they have extorted from us by diſloyal practices, and which they know all their invectives cannot provoke us to execute. But *the weapons of our warfare are not carnal* †, but ſpiritual; inſtruction, conviction, exhortation. Now unhappily the perſons, whoſe peculiar office it is to diſpenſe theſe, are, in all Ireland, ſcarce eight hundred: a number vaſtly inferior, not only to that of the popiſh prieſts, but to the neceſſities even of the preſent proteſtants. Beſides, of theſe few, a large proportion have no places of abode in or near their pariſhes. This alone would be a ſad diſcouragement; but a ſtill worſe is, that where ignorance hath long obtained almoſt univerſal poſſeſſion, and people are unuſed to reaſon, perſuading them out of ſettled habits of religious belief and practice hath difficulties hardly ſurmountable; and yet leſs when the application is made to them by perſons, whom they diſlike; but leaſt of all, when hearkening to it for a moment is prohibited under penalty of anathemas, at which they tremble. Attempts have been made; their language hath been learned on purpoſe; and none would or durſt give the preacher a hearing. Poſſibly ſome clergymen may have been too much diſheartened by ſuch inſtances. Poſſibly others, God forgive them, may have been glad to excuſe themſelves from taking diſagreeable pains. And the heads of our church have not an abſolute power over their inferiors, to ſend them on what miſſions they pleaſe, as thoſe of the church of Rome have. How far they have exerted the little, that is left them, I cannot ſay. But, before either biſhops or parochial miniſters are vehemently blamed, let the laity reflect, whether they alſo may not have

* Eph. iv. 20. † 2 Cor. x. 4.

have been negligent in relation to many of these poor creatures, who live under their roofs; and try, what impression they can make on them. If they succeed, I hope it will beget emulation: if not, they will be readier to pardon want of success, or even despair, in others: and conclude, that no method will effectually teach them our religion, but education in it.

Were children taught nothing early, they would know nothing, and be fit for nothing, as long as they lived. But some principles of behaviour they will learn: and therefore should learn the best, which are those of true piety. Their instructors may direct them wrong in that respect, as well as in others: but still they must give them such advice for both worlds, as they think is beneficial; no less than such food, as they think is wholesome. And if one lesson be, what is constantly one of ours, *to prove every thing*, as they become able, *to hold fast that which is good, and abstain from all appearance of evil* *: this is a potent corrective of whatever mistakes may chance to be infused into them. Without this corrective, nay, prohibiting it as poison, the Romanists employ the whole influence of education to the utmost: and therefore cannot reproach us, who employ it with such a restriction. Nor surely can the bitterest enemies to instilling of prejudices doubt, which sort are better. They may wish perhaps, that children should have no faith, but a scorn of it: and they may bring up their own children thus, and take the consequences. But mankind in general must and will have a religion: and multitudes are turned or kept papists, by seeing, that so many pretended protestants have none. Or supposing the project feasible in itself, and otherwise unpunished by Providence: yet morals in private life, and order in public, cannot but decay and be lost, along with the fear of God.

Still, to educate children in our own persuasion, against the will of fathers or mothers, would be cruel, though legal; unless, by some overt act, they lose, or give up, their claim to educate them; whatever title the state may have to see, that they are bred loyal and useful subjects. And therefore our society takes none away by authority, but those of vagrant beggars.

* 1 Thess. v. 21, 22.

beggars. Yet our adverſaries, I conceive, would few, if any of them, be ſo ſcrupulous as to make that diſtinction. And certainly not one of them would queſtion, but young perſons, committed to their care, might and ought to be inſtructed in their creed. Nor, I preſume, would they inquire very ſtrictly, what induced the parent to delegate to them his right. We induce him, neither by hard uſage, nor menaces nor rewards, nor promiſes: but only propoſe to him the benefit of his child. And nature enjoins him to promote even its worldly benefit in every lawful manner. His prieſts indeed may tell him, this manner is unlawful. But that, and many other aſſertions of theirs, of which ſome appear at firſt ſight very ſtrange ones, are flatly contradicted by numbers of perſons, as wiſe, as learned, ſeemingly as ſolicitous too about their own eternal happineſs. He hath no ſolid grounds to prefer the opinion of the former to that of the latter. And therefore in this uncertainty, though he may reſolve for himſelf not to change ſides, break his old connexions, and make his old friends uneaſy; yet why ſhould he not intruſt a ſon or a daughter with thoſe, who will both provide better for their temporal intereſts, and qualify them to judge better about their religious ones, than he can?

Whatever their reaſonings may be, the fact is, that popiſh parents are willing to ſend their children to the newly erected charter-ſchools; and more are likely to become willing. The reproach of it muſt wear off with the novelty; the ſtories of their bad treatment there have been diſproved, as faſt as they have been raiſed; and, I believe, the prieſts have often found it their wiſdom not to overſtretch their authority in this caſe, for fear of weakening it in all. But granting, that theſe houſes cannot be always quite filled with the offspring of papiſts, which however make in all of them vaſtly the majority; yet the admiſſion of orphans or vagrants, who elſe would fall into the hands of papiſts, hath the ſame good effect. And were now and then a few, whoſe parents are known proteſtants, to be received; no one, who approves either our common charity-ſchools, or that great charity-ſchool, the foundling-hoſpital, could fail to be pleaſed even with this branch of the management; eſpecially conſidering, how well the whole is conducted.

The particular rules cannot be ſpecified here: but one there is, of great extent and importance; which would God were obſerved

obſerved in this nation; combining inſtruction with labour. The firſt part of inſtruction, to ſuch as need it, is teaching them Engliſh; for till they underſtand that competently, their only inlet of knowledge is from the prieſts and their followers. They learn alſo ſomewhat of writing and arithmetic, which are of uſe in the loweſt occupations; and more of reading; for the good books, which are put into their hands, when they go away, may contribute greatly to fix them in true religion. Of this, the plain doctrines and practical precepts are taught them, with neceſſary preſervatives againſt popiſh errors; a proceeding no leſs prudent, than conſcientious. For were they inſtructed in gainful arts, but the notions of their fathers left to grow up in them, it might cauſe in time a dangerous acceſſion to the property of that intereſt. And were thoſe notions to be rooted out, and no better planted; labour without religion, will generally, as ſoon as ever it enriches, if not before, give place to idleneſs, diſſoluteneſs, and all ſorts of crimes; whereas diligence from a principle of piety will go on, providing for deſcendants, for relations, for the poor; and teaching them all to provide, in their turns, for ſuch as belong to them.

But the book-learning of theſe children takes up only two hours of their day; the reſt they ſpend in work. And ſo much of the boys work, as can, is agriculture, for their nouriſhment and clothing; together with ſome rudiments of planting and gardening. Thus every ſchool is a little farm; and helps to raiſe emulation in the moſt neceſſary of all buſineſs, of which the example and the ſkill is peculiarly wanting in Ireland. Beſides this, both ſexes learn thoſe kinds of manufacture, eſpecially the linen, for which there is like to be a demand; and ſuch qualifications, as are requiſite for common ſervants; proteſtant ſervants being, on many accounts, highly valuable. The earnings of the Scholars, by the things which they make or do for others, are, in moſt foundations, given to the maſter or miſtreſs, as part of their ſalary; an admirable way of ſecuring the children's induſtry.

If ſtill it be imagined, that they might do more: inquiry and obſervation will gradually ſuggeſt every where the means to that end. But they are put out, as ſoon as their labour is worth having; for the deſign is not to get money for the ſchools by them; but to ſupply that nation with the quickeſt

ſucceſſion poſſible of proteſtant workmen. If, notwithſtanding, the expence of the charity be thought immoderate; it ſhould be recollected, that the mere building and fitting up ſo many new fabrics, muſt be a heavy burthen, which will ceaſe in time. And two or three have been more ſumptuous, than needed; but at the charge of the perſons, who deſired it, not of the ſociety; and care hath been taken of late to obviate all pretence for that complaint. Another conſideration is, that the children muſt be removed to a diſtance from their parents, and their prieſts; elſe the latter, at leaſt, would be perpetually tampering with them; and this precaution coſts a great deal. They muſt alſo be entirely maintained; elſe they would not be ſent. But the food and cloathing of each, over and above the produce of their labour, is only about fifty ſhillings a-year; ſurely a ſmall charge for ſo excellent a purpoſe; beſides that the whole money, laid out, circulates in the neighbourhood.

When their ſchooling is completed, they are all apprenticed; and, which ſhows in what eſteem they are held, nothing hath been given with them for ſeveral years paſt. As many go out to huſbandry, as perſons will employ that way; more cannot. None, for ſome time, have been put to ſea: partly becauſe it ſeems better at preſent, that they ſhould people their own country with well-diſpoſed inhabitants, than be conſumed in voyages: and partly alſo, becauſe a falſe rumour, induſtriouſly propagated, of their being tranſported, for ſlaves, to remote regions, hath raiſed ſo wild a ſuſpicion, that they, who are tranſplanted from one part of the iſland to another, muſt all be conveyed by land, to diſprove it. They are placed only in Proteſtant families; and when they leave them, have a bounty of five pounds from the ſociety, on their marrying Proteſtants; it being generally found, that when either party, eſpecially the wife, is a Papiſt, the other is perverted by the help of the prieſt; or however, the children are educated in that perſuaſion. I wiſh the laity, men and women, of our communion, were equally aſſiduous, and equally aſſiſted by their miniſters.

It hath been affirmed, that, after all the care ſaid to be taken, moſt of theſe children relapſe. And at firſt many did, who yet muſt not only have been made uſefuller in civil ſociety by what they learnt, but, one ſhould think, muſt alſo feel ſome gratitude

gratitude for the improvements which they had received; and diſlike our religion the leſs, the more they knew of it. But however that might be, I am aſſured, on particular inquiry, that now, ſince the method of tranſplanting hath been followed, extremely few have become apoſtates. Indeed why ſhould not habit alone operate as powerfully in our favour, as againſt us? And why ſhould not young people, thus grounded, ſee the reaſonableneſs, and feel the amiableneſs of proteſtantiſm, eſpecially when compared with groſs Iriſh popery, ſo ſtrongly, as to be more likely, when grown up, to bring over others, than be brought over by them? Why, in particular, may not their affectionate remonſtrances and behaviour, aſſiſted by the tender workings of nature in their behalf, prevail, ſooner or later, on their ignorant parents, to *forſake the fooliſh, and live, and go in the way of underſtanding?*

Still it hath been ſaid by ſome, that at beſt the progreſs of the deſign is too ſlow, to produce any material alteration. And we own, that for ſome time it was almoſt imperceptible. Several years muſt paſs, before a ſingle child could be ſent from the ſchools; and ſeveral more, before one could act for himſelf. Nay, ſince that, we have not advanced ſo faſt, as might be wiſhed; no good deſign ever doth. Nor indeed is over great haſte adviſable. A new eſtabliſhment cannot prudently be made any where, till propoſals, reaſonably advantageous, are offered; and a committee fixed, of truſty and active perſons, in the neighbourhood, to ſuperintend it; which, in the midſt of Papiſts, where it is moſt needed, is hardeſt to be found. However, it is no inconſiderable thing, after all, in ſo ſhort a ſpace to have had one thouſand five hundred children put apprentices, and above one thouſand ſix hundred more now actually inſtructing. Were only the ſame number to be kept up, it would augment, without ceaſing, the inclination of the balance to our ſide; and at length the ſcale muſt turn. But every year hath brought an increaſe; and, we may juſtly hope, will bring a greater. The good conſequences of the undertaking will be more evident; theſe very ſcholars will, many of them, become maſters of families, and take ſervants from the ſchools; become rich, and contribute to ſupport, to enlarge, to multiply them. And they, who, by objecting that we make little ſpeed, are one main cauſe of our

making leſs than we ſhould otherwiſe, ought by liberal benefactions to compenſate for paſt diſcouragements, and aſſiſt us in proceeding quicker.

No one ſurely will affect to diſapprove, leſt he ſhould be obliged to ſubſcribe. No one can be barbarous enough to deſire the continuance of poor wretches in error and helpleſsneſs, that he may tyrannize over them with impunity. No one can bear ſo determined an ill-will, either to religion, as to favour the profeſſion of theirs, becauſe it is an abſurd one; or to the clergy, as to oppoſe the forming of theſe children into rational creatures and good ſubjects, becauſe they contrived and executed the plan for it; which ought to be deemed, on the contrary, great amends for any ſuppoſed former neglects. No wonder, if the project, before it took place, were treated by many as chimerical; but now, fact hath demonſtrated both its practicableneſs and its utility. Propoſals indeed may be offered for amending it in ſome parts; though the unexperienced ought to offer them with much diffidence; but really, for objections againſt the whole there is no room left. Both the ſcheme and the conduct of it have been more univerſally applauded by the Iriſh proteſtants in general, who muſt be judges of the improvement, to which they are eye-witneſſes, than ever any thing of the kind was before in any country. Succeſſive Lord Lieutenants have unanimouſly recommended it to our gracious Sovereign; who, with equal generoſity and wiſdom, prevented the imminent ruin of it in its infancy, eighteen years ago; and hath upheld it ever ſince, by an annual donation of a thouſand pounds, and occaſional ones amounting to ſixteen thouſand more. The Parliament of Ireland alſo, in concurrence with the King, have ſettled on it the produce of a new tax; valuable in itſelf, and doubly ſo as a teſtimonial of the ſentiments of the Legiſlature. Nay, the very papiſts have acknowledged the efficacy of our ſchools, by ſetting up others of their own in competition with them. And ſo far as they may do any good, we are glad to be the occaſion of it; but we muſt counteract the hurt, which they may do, by a redoubled zeal for what they are aiming to defeat.

Indeed this charity is a public concern of both nations, not only in a religious, but a political view. It relieves preſent diſtreſſes, which always endanger the quiet of a ſtate, more or leſs;

leſs; and prevents thoſe of generations to come. In proportion as it ſpreads, the country will be more civilized, more cultivated, more populous, more wealthy. Theſe children will ſtay at home; and not run abroad to ſettle in popiſh lands, which hitherto the ſameneſs of belief hath made ſo agreeable to the inhabitants of that country. By their induſtry, and the good fruits of it, they will ſtir up emulation in all of their own rank. By their conviction of the truth of proteſtantiſm, they will be ſatisfied, that the forfeitures of their predeceſſors, in the two laſt centuries, for their many rebellions in ſupport of the oppoſite cauſe, were deſerved. They will be thoroughly diſunited from thoſe, whom they have renounced; will love their maſters for being of the ſame faith with them; and ſtand up for the defence of it, on trying occaſions, in word and deed. But further, even the Papiſts of Ireland will have reaſon given them, by theſe ſchools, to think well of their proteſtant neighbours, and of the clergy in particular. Their prieſts have ſuffered them to languiſh for ages in ignorance, hunger, and nakedneſs; we beſtow on them knowledge and plenty. To them they owe the guilt of their inſurrections and maſſacres, the miſery of their attainders and confiſcation: to us they will owe the bleſſing of being humanized and enriched.

Now of all theſe advantages, Britain muſt partake. The wealth of that people will not only, in loyal hands, render them a ſtrong barrier to us, but will circulate continually from the extremes to the heart of the empire. Along with that, we ſhall gain a ſtill more deſirable treaſure, their good opinion. They will plainly perceive, that we neither hate nor deſpiſe them; that if we find it needful to reſtrain their induſtry in ſome things, we excite, aid and direct it in others; and zealouſly encourage what evidently conduces to their preſent, and, we are perſuaded, to their future happineſs alſo. Then, as our undertaking ſucceeds, we ſhall have thoſe, if wanted, for proteſtant ſoldiers in our own troops, who elſe would be popiſh ones in the ſervice of our foreign adverſaries; and we ſhall no longer be over-run, as we are, in this metropolis, in its ſuburbs, in our Eaſtern and our Weſtern ſettlements, with Iriſh Catholics, as they call themſelves, to an amount, which few of us imagine; and at which all of us, if we knew it, would be juſtly alarmed. Our religion is loſing ground on the

conti-

continent; we have ſo much more need to be compact, and of one mind, at home. It is loſing ground even amongſt ourſelves; and God give thoſe attention to the danger, who ought to guard us againſt it. But ſuch care no way interferes with an attempt of making repriſals; and carrying the war, by means of theſe ſchools, into our enemies head-quarters. If we conquer them there, we ſhall have much leſs cauſe to be afraid of them here. The ſupply will be cut off: on the reſidue of the party like methods will produce like effects. And when once they are produced, the inhabitants of the Britiſh iſles and colonies will all have the ſame friends and foes: our fellow-ſubjects, whoſe eye is now evil againſt us, will not only *for their brethren and companions ſakes wiſh us proſperity, but becauſe of the houſe of the Lord our God will ſeek to do us good* *. Our civil and eccleſiaſtical community will, in compariſon with their preſent ſtate, *look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the ſun, and terrible as an army with banners* †.

What then remains, but that ſo worthy a deſign be vigorouſly executed; that we contribute to it, according to our ability; and move others to contribute, according to our influence? The proteſtants of Ireland are doubtleſs moſt immediately concerned to exert themſelves. And yet the printed accounts from thence intimate, what elſe we ſhould be cautious of ſaying, that all perſons there have not been ſo bountiful as they ſhould. For ſome years, the main ſupport was from England. And ſince that, of the Iriſh ſubſcriptions, thoſe of the biſhops make towards one third; and, together with thoſe of the clergy, near one half. Yet the utility is general; and the laity have a much more durable intereſt in their eſtates, than the clergy have in theirs; and a larger intereſt, even in moſt church eſtates, than church-men themſelves. It is not ſtrange however, if they judged, that theſe ought to ſtand foremoſt in the work; if they ſaw more difficulties on the ſpot, than we here could diſcern at a diſtance; and were held back, ſomewhat too long, by doubts of ſucceſs. Beſides, though the ſtated ſubſcriptions of that country are ſmaller, than might be expected; they far exceed ours: their preſents and legacies have riſen to no inconſiderable ſum; and many, inſtead of money, have given lands. The original formation

* Pſal cxxii. 8, 9. † Cant. vi. 10.

mation of the ſcheme too is altogether owing to the Iriſh: on them alſo hath lain the care and labour of carrying it into execution; ſuperintending every ſchool, and conducting the whole machine, from the beginning to this day; without which, ever ſo great liberalities from us would have been thrown away, and ſunk entirely.

Therefore, whilſt we remind them, that, both in conſcience and honour, they ſhould take on themſelves a due ſhare of what primarily belongs to them; let us remember how much they have taken; and though we ſhould think it not enough; let us rather try to win upon our brethren by gentle repreſentations, and engaging examples of beneficence, than reproach any of them unkindly; and yet reſemble them in that deficiency, for which we blame them. Their eſteem and affection is well worth purchaſing at a much dearer rate; for we purchaſe conſequentially ſtrength and quiet to ourſelves. We were once in the ſame ſtate of blindneſs and bondage, that the poor wretches of that iſland are: let us expreſs our gratitude to God for freeing us from it, by endeavouring to free them. We have been known to them chiefly hitherto by our victories and juſt ſeverities; let us now ſhow them our compaſſionate bounty; and thus acquaint them with the true genius of proteſtantiſm. We have been commonly traduced amongſt them, as deſtitute of religion; let us take this amiable method of confuting the imputation. We are wealthy; they are indigent; let us prove our wealth to them in the moſt reputable, the moſt uſeful manner. We ſend much of it continually to nations unrelated, ill affected to us, for things which do us no good, but harm: let us ſtrike off a few articles yearly from our vanity and luxury; employ the ſavings to advance genuine piety, loyalty and induſtry, in our ſiſter iſland; and ſo benefit ourſelves and her at once. We of the clergy ought *in all things to ſhow ourſelves patterns of good works* *: and ſurely then for the ſervice of religion, of the proteſtant religion, of a people ſo nearly allied to us. Amongſt our laity alſo, *unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall much be required* †, on all fitting occaſions. And there ought to be in every man, though poſſeſſed only of moderate fortunes, *a willing mind according to that he hath* ‡. But however excuſable many ſuch may be; they

* Tit. ii. 7. † Luke xii. 41. ‡ 2 Cor. viii. 12.

they who are ſprung from Ireland, certainly ought to diſtinguiſh themſelves in forwarding this charity; their relation demands it of them. They, who have eſtates there, or incomes of any ſort ariſing from thence, ſhould be liberal to it, beyond others, who have no ſuch connexions. For it is natural to be generous peculiarly in the place, from which their capacity of being generous proceeds. And the more their circumſtances and ſtations point out to them to reſide in that place; if they do not, the more ample amends they ſhould make it ſome other way; beſides that what is expended there to encourage labour and liberty, will ere long greatly increaſe the produce, the rent, the value of each perſon's lands.

Theſe conſiderations are laid before you, ſolely for your cool reflexion in retirement. No advantage will be taken of any ſudden impreſſion, which they may poſſibly make now; or of the willingneſs to give, or ſhame to refuſe, that might accompany the ſocial meal, which is to follow our preſent aſſembly. This is treating you with ſingular delicacy and reſpect. Certainly it will not fail of moving you to the proper return, of ſuch voluntary deliberate donations, yearly or occaſional, as beſt evidence a free heart. Where they will be received, is publicly advertiſed.

But then, whilſt we join with our friends of that kingdom in what we can both do, we muſt rely on them abſolutely for what inſpectors alone can do. Much praiſe, we are ſenſible, they have merited on that account, from the higheſt to the loweſt. We can only exhort them, and we know they will *ſuffer the word of exhortation, to abound more and more**: to re-examine frequently the plan, and ſee what may be corrected or improved in it; the management, and ſee what may inſenſibly have gone wrong, or been relaxed: to hear objections attentively and candidly, both from approvers and diſapprovers of the ſcheme; for among the latter may be perſons of conſequence and of value, though under the dominion of prejudices: to rectify or vindicate things, as the caſe requires; and *not let their good be evil ſpoken of*†. The choice of maſters and miſtreſſes for the ſchools is a moſt eſſential article of their truſt. Theſe ought never to be taken from motives of

* Heb. xiii. 22. 1 Theſſ. iv. 1. † Rom. xiv. 16.

of ſelf-intereſt, importunity, compaſſion, cheapneſs; or any other, than a well-grounded perſuaſion, that they are qualified, by their ſerious and practical faith in the proteſtant religion, their ſkill and diligence, their ſpirit and temper, to teach the children, committed to them, their duty to God and the king, together with the means of getting an honeſt livelihood. For neither of theſe, without the other, will ſuffice. But as keeping them to work may be more for the private emolument of the maſter or miſtreſs, than principling them well; and a failure in the former is more eaſily perceived; there muſt be a cloſer watchfulneſs over the latter. Yet they are not to be taught an uncharitable vehemence againſt papiſts, like theirs againſt us; much leſs an imagination, that ſuch bitterneſs is religion enough; but a fervent affection for the doctrines and precepts of primitive Chriſtianity, with a conſcientious dread of *making* either *of none effect through the commandments and traditions of men* *. At the ſame time, whatever indulgence, whatever appearance, may exalt them, either in reality, or but in fancy, beyond their due rank, is to be prohibited moſt peremptorily. If knowledge of accounts, or even of writing, will tempt them to think they are above the meaneſt buſineſs; they had much better have little or none of it imparted to them. And in all reſpects they ſhould be brought up ſo, as will induce them to look upon their ſubſequent apprenticeſhip in the light of a preferment.

For preſerving the inſtitution in this vigour, it will be extremely material to keep a frequent correſpondence, entering into particulars, with the local committee of every ſchool; to compare the management of one with another, diffuſe the notice of whatever good œconomy hath been any where introduced; and recommend it to all, who can properly make trial of it. Once a prudent and experienced perſon was ſent to viſit a conſiderable part of theſe foundations; to examine their ſtate, and propoſe diminutions of expences, improvements of their lands, uſeful regulations of various kinds †. Poſſibly a repetition of this practice, at moderate intervals, with a report to the committee at Dublin of what had appeared on the enquiry, might have more good conſequences, than can be at preſent diſtinctly foreſeen.

* Mark vii. 7. 13. Col. ii. 8. † In 1746.

In putting the children out, it is of the utmoſt moment, that the perſons, who take them, be not only nominal proteſtants, but real Chriſtians. For indeed they had better turn papiſts again, than become ſuch profligates, as the examples and common talk, it may be feared, of ſome families would make them. They had better think wrong in ſeveral articles of religion, than ſcorn the whole; and be ready to do miſchief in particular points occaſionally, than in all conſtantly. But one would contrive moſt ſtudiouſly to ſecure them from both; and for that purpoſe, if poſſible, not to place them with popiſh fellow-ſervants; at leaſt without a mixture of others. And if thoſe who are intruſted with them, would but have the goodneſs to beſtow ſome peculiar attention on their moral and religious conduct, it might often prevent the loſs of all that had been done before; and both they, and the reſt of their houſe, as well as the poor children, would be the better for it.

The prieſts, we are told, purſue them to the remoteſt corners of the iſland, in hopes of recovering them. Surely then we ſhould be as anxious to retain them. But above all, the miniſters of their pariſhes ought to eye them without intermiſſion; inculcate upon them the moſt earneſt cautions not to diſcredit their education; and engage them in the firmeſt promiſes, whenever they are attacked, either in point of doctrines or duties, to apply for help from them immediately. Our adverſaries obtain and perpetuate their influence over their people, by having much intercourſe with them, by letting themſelves down to them. *They are wiſe in their generation* *. If we hope to be a match for them, we muſt imitate them. And then, as they act thus, partly for their own private ends, and we can do it only out of kindneſs, we ſhall ſo far have the advantage. Not for this reaſon only, but for many more, miniſters ought to reſide in their pariſhes, and *ſow ſpiritual things* where *they reap carnal* †. The Legiſlature ought firſt to make proviſion for reſidence in a ſufficient number of places, then to require it. And mere perſonal abode, with a legal performance of ſtated offices, ought by no means to be regarded as the ſubſtance of parochial duty. It is not a formal and indolent, much leſs a gay and voluptuous, but a ſelf-denying, condeſcending, pains-taking clergy, that will do good; who are

* Luke xvi. 8. † 1 Cor. ix. 11.

are *inſtant in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon* *: who *knowing the terrors of the Lord, perſuade men* † to avoid them; who loving his promiſes, invite men to partake of them. Now, if the laity would have ſuch paſtors as theſe, they muſt prefer and recommend ſuch, diſcountenancing others. And if they would have the labours of theſe effectual, they muſt permit them to have a due effect upon themſelves. Elſe our religion will be reproached and blaſphemed for their ſakes; which, would they obſerve its rules, we might hope to ſee honoured and embraced. For it is remarkable, that in thoſe counties of Ireland, where proteſtants are ſtricteſt, papiſts are feweſt.

But then, if whilſt we in England ſay theſe things to our neighbours over the water, we ſet them a pattern of doing the contrary; if our laity are profane, if our clergy are ſupine; we ſhall exhort them with an ill grace and ſmall ſucceſs. Therefore let us begin to amend, and there will be ſome proſpect of their following. Or, if they begin, let us think it more honour to copy them in what is right, than to lead them in what is wrong. And God grant we may both *conſider one another, to provoke unto love and good works; and ſo much the more, as we ſee the day approaching* ‡: too probably the day of national calamity, unleſs we avert it by a ſpeedy reformation; but certainly the day of death, and that awful *account*, which *every one ſhall give of himſelf to God* ‖.

* 2 Tim. iv. 2. † 2 Cor. v. 11. ‡ Heb. x. 24, 25. ‖ Rom. xiv. 12.

SERMON CXXXVIII.

PERSECUTION A DECISIVE EVIDENCE OF AN UNCHRISTIAN SPIRIT.

Preached in the Parish Church of St Mary, Lambeth, *November* 5. 1758.

JOHN xvi. 2, 3.

They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service.

And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

THE various evils of human life are, all of them, just matter of serious and melancholy consideration; but each in its due proportion and degree. Such of them, as flow of necessity from that order of things, which providence established in consequence of man's original transgression, are undoubtedly very heavy and afflicting: labour, pain, sickness, death; whether befalling us, or our friends. But a great alleviation of them is, that God inflicts them on us, not man; and uses them to serve excellent purposes, of teaching us resignation to himself, and compassion to each other; of weaning us from this world, and exciting in our hearts earnest desires of a better. So that these calamities, being a wholesome, though rough, exercise of our virtue and piety, may be considered, in this view, with comfort enough. But such as proceed from our own mutual injuries, though even these *work together for good to them that love God**, are a ground for much deeper concern; for here is guilt, as well as suffering: Mankind not only multiplying present torments, very needlessly, one to another, but treasuring up future and eternal ones to themselves;

* Rom. viii. 28.

ſelves; defeating, as far as creatures are able, the gracious deſigns of the Creator of all; and turning his world into the very contrary of what he intended it ſhould be.

Well might one have hoped, that our natural principles of humanity, at leaſt of religion, would have ſo far reſtrained us, that evils of this kind, if they exiſted at all, ſhould not be frequent, or extreme. But early and general experience hath too fully confuted ſuch imaginations. However, when revelation came in to the aid of reaſon, giving ſo much clearer notice of our duty, and ſtronger motives to it; one ſhould firmly have expected, that the voice of God, ſpeaking expreſsly from heaven, muſt have produced a general and a laſting reformation. But, inſtead of this, a new gloom ariſes from hence, to make our view ſtill more diſcouraging. We ſee revealed religion, as well as natural, profeſſedly ſcorned by many, and ſeriouſly regarded by very few. Yet, though it hath but little influence, were all that influence good, there would ſtill be ſome joy. But to have the very *light, which is in us, become darkneſs* *; and what was calculated, beyond all things, to make us good and happy, perverted to make us wicked and miſerable, this completes the ſorrow.

Yet ſo it is: *The gold itſelf is become dim; the moſt fine gold is changed* †. The piety of the patriarchal ages degenerated very early into pernicious idolatries, full of rites impure and barbarous. And no ſooner almoſt were the Jews reformed effectually from the worſhip of falſe gods, than their zeal for the true one became ſo by degrees, ſo blind and fierce, that the condition of many of them might ſeem not to be extremely altered for the better. Towards the heathen, and one another, indeed, their bitterneſs might uſually defend itſelf by the plea of antecedent provocation; but their treatment of Chriſtianity, when it appeared, was void of all excuſe. That perfectly benevolent doctrine, recommended to them by every inſtance of unmixed goodneſs attending its delivery, if it had not charms enough to attract their love, had ſurely nothing to excite their hatred. Yet ſuch was the turn of this perverſe nation, that even their own Meſſiah, *the hope of Iſrael* ‡, contradicting their favourite ſcheme, of devoutly indulging their luſts, and piouſly tyrannizing over the reſt of the world; they crucified

* Matth. vi. 23. † Lam. iv. 1. ‡ Acts xxviii. 20.

crucified him, and purſued his followers, with that inhuman bigotry, which, in the words of the text, he foretold they would.

Nor did this wicked ſpirit actuate them alone: but the heathens alſo, who had borne, for the moſt part, very patiently, with the infinite variety of one another's gods; who had long borne with the Jewiſh religion, as oppoſite to all their own as could be; yet perſecuted the Chriſtians with a moſt barbarous rage, for three hundred years; till at length, triumphing over cruelty with mere patience and innocence, it gradually became the eſtabliſhed belief of the Roman empire.

And then, at leaſt, would a compaſſionate ſpectator of the courſe of this world, tired out with the ſins and miſeries of it, have ſurely thought, the time muſt be come now, to *lift up his head**, and rejoice in the happy change. For who could poſſibly imagine, that the profeſſors of ſo merciful a religion, eſpecially after experiencing ſo long the evil of perſecution themſelves, would ever be brought to exerciſe it on their own brethren. *But how then ſhould the ſcriptures be fulfilled, thus it muſt be*†? The wiſdom of God foreſaw and foretold, what could not but ſeem to the firſt diſciples very incredible in itſelf, that, by quick degrees, their ſucceſſors would bring into the Chriſtian church almoſt all the corruptions, which they had heard their maſter condemn in the Jewiſh: human additions to the law of God; human traditions, that *made it of no effect*‡; diſhoneſt zeal to gain proſelytes; implacable reſentment againſt all who differed from them.

Too ſoon, and too wide, did theſe offences ſpread among the profeſſed followers of Chriſt: and would God any part of them were quite innocent, that ever had the power of being guilty. But unſpeakably the deepeſt root did this evil take in the See of Rome: which began ſurprizingly early to verify of itſelf one part of our Saviour's words, by *putting out of the ſynagogue*, excommunicating, or at leaſt attempting to excommunicate, without cauſe, the churches of Aſia, in the controverſy of Eaſter; and employed afterwards, at ſome times the dignity of the imperial ſeat, at others the reverence of a principal apoſtolic foundation, to obtain continually freſh acceſſions

* Luke xxi. 28. † Matth. xxvi. 54. ‡ Matth. xv. 6. Mark vii. 13.

ceſſions of power; till at length a biſhop of that See, in the ſeventh century *, aſſumed the title, which his almoſt immediate predeceſſor † had declared to be a mark of antichriſt; that of the univerſal paſtor of Chriſt's church. And his ſucceſſors took effectual care, that it ſhould be fed with ſuch doctrines moſt diligently, as were moſt ſubſervient to their wicked deſigns. All, who oppoſed any of their novelties, but eſpecially any new claim of authority, they proſecuted with infinitely greater vehemence, than if guilty of the groſſeſt immoralities: and not only ſubjected them to the utmoſt rigour of ſpiritual cenſures, but to the heavieſt temporal penalties that they could; and at length to death itſelf.

Even over princes, in proceſs of time, was this unwarrantable dominion extended: and having often been exerciſed in fact, was in the laſt place openly aſſerted, as a juſt right. For the fourth council of Lateran, held in the year 1215, and pretended to be a general, and therefore infallible one, after beginning with a Creed, of which tranſubſtantiation, then firſt eſtabliſhed, made a part; proceeds, in the third canon, to decree, "that all the deniers of that, or any other of the [pre-" tended] Catholic doctrines, be excommunicated by the ſe-" cular arm: that all, who are ſuſpected, unleſs they clear " themſelves within a year, be deemed heretics; and that all " civil powers, of what rank ſoever, be admoniſhed, and, if " need require, compelled by eccleſiaſtical cenſures, to ſwear, " that they will extirpate all heretics out of their territories; " and if any of them refuſes it, that he alſo be excommunica-" ted; and if he give not ſatisfaction within a year, the Pope " ſhall declare his ſubjects to be free from their oath of fide-" lity, and give his dominions to catholics; who, driving he-" reſy out of them, may poſſeſs them without contradiction, " and preſerve them in the purity of the faith." Theſe are the words of that canon. Nay further ſtill; the ſame council gives to all, who, taking upon them the badge of the croſs, ſhall fight againſt heretics, the ſame ſpiritual privileges and indulgences, as if they fought againſt infidels. For making war on the latter, merely for the ſake of religion, though a moſt unchriſtian employment, they had already, for ſelfiſh ends, taught to be meritorious. And having now raiſed fighting

* Boniface the Third. † Gregory the Firſt.

ing againſt the former to the ſame degree of merit, they ſoon effected the deſtruction, not only of the Albigenſes, a very blameable ſect, but of the poor Waldenſes likewiſe, much better believers than themſelves; thus fulfilling the ſecond part of Chriſt's prediction, *Yea, the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you, will think, that he doth God ſervice.*

After theſe beginnings, the inſtances, that followed, of Popiſh uſurpation, treachery, and cruelty, in every nation in Europe, every nation upon earth, in which popery hath got footing, have been ſo numerous, that the time would fail me even to name them: and therefore I ſhall confine myſelf to a general mention of ſuch as have happened in a country, which, God be thanked, hath felt much leſs of them, than many others; I mean our own. And this I ſhall do without bitterneſs, far from exaggerating any one fact, or dwelling with the leaſt pleaſure on things ſo diſhonourable to the Chriſtian profeſſion; and much too mournful to be remembered, if it were ſafe to forget them.

No ſooner * had King Henry the Eighth been declared, what he undoubtedly was, the ſupreme head of the clergy, as well as laity, in his own kingdom; but though he had meddled with no one point of the Romiſh doctrine beſides; nay, was ſo far from being a proteſtant, that all his life long he burnt others for being ſo; yet Pope Paul the Third pronounced him, by a bull, to have forfeited his crown, required all his ſubjects to revolt from him; and all Chriſtian kings to make war upon him. And in fact this produced ſome dangerous inſurrections, both in his reign, and that of his ſon Edward the ſixth; under whom no papiſt was put to death on account of religion, excepting ſuch as rebelled on account of it. How deſtructive to proteſtants the ſhort reign of his ſiſter, Queen Mary, was, notwithſtanding their raiſing her to the throne, and notwithſtanding her ſolemn promiſes to them, we all know. Yet, in the firſt ten years of her ſucceſſor, Queen Elizabeth, not one papiſt, not one of the perſecutors, ſuffered; but all enjoyed quietly the private exerciſe of their own worſhip. Indeed almoſt all of them conformed publicly to the eſtabliſhed

* The following facts are chiefly taken from Foulis's hiſtory of Romiſh Treaſons, fol. 1673, a diſcourſe concerning the original of the Powder Plot, 4to, 1674, and a book intitled, *The Gunpowder Treaſon*, republiſhed, with a preface, by Biſhop Barlow, 8vo, 1679.

ed church; till, in her eleventh year, Pope Pius the Fifth forbad it; and finding his ſecret deſigns ineffectual, commanded, by a bull, the whole nation to rebel againſt her; and denounced a curſe againſt all, that ſhould obey her; which order of his a daring traitor publiſhed in the city of London; and receiving for it the reward, which he deſerved, is the firſt martyr, of whom the Romaniſts have to boaſt in her reign; for a real martyr they account him. And the famous Thuanus, a French hiſtorian of their own communion, having called this man's deed a raſh action; even ſo gentle a cenſure was ordered by the court of Rome to be ſtruck out of his book.

Immediately after this, they began to ſeparate from the church, and rebel againſt the ſtate: and though very unſucceſsful, yet held themſelves bound by the Pope's anathema to rebel on; till his ſucceſſor, Gregory the Thirteenth, pitying the dangers, to which they had expoſed themſelves, for ten years together, gave them at length a permiſſion in form to be quiet; provided it were no longer, than till the above-mentioned bull could be openly executed. In the mean while, another method was taken, of private attempts to murder the Queen. Many ſuch there were; and almoſt all of them encouraged by the confeſſors of the wretches, who engaged in them: particularly by thoſe of that new invented order, which hath profanely diſtinguiſhed, by the name of the meek and holy Jesus, the moſt bloody and faithleſs combination of men, whom the ſun ever beheld; among whoſe fundamental conſtitutions it is, that whatever their ſuperior commands, they ſhall always think lawful; and renouncing blindly their own judgment, receive the word, that comes out of his mouth, as that of Chriſt himſelf. This is that ſociety, which one of themſelves, Father Campian, in a letter to Queen Elizabeth's council, declares, have entered into a covenant, to deſtroy, by all methods they can, all heretic princes; in which, he ſays, they will perſiſt, ſo long as one of them remains in being. And this man alſo, being executed here for treaſon, is reputed by his brethren a martyr.

No wonder, if in ſuch a ſtate of things, at length ſevere laws were made. None ſuch had been made in the firſt twelve years of the Queen's reign: nor was it capital for prieſts to be in England, till the twenty-ſeventh: when the better ſort,

even of themſelves, acknowledged the treaſons of the reſt to have deſerved it. After this, freſh attempts followed; the Spaniſh invaſion, and the Iriſh rebellion, both excited and bleſſed by the Pope: beſides endeavours to raiſe inſurrections here; in which Garnet, the ſuperior of the Engliſh Jeſuits, was deeply concerned: to whom, as himſelf owned, orders were ſent by the Pope, forbidding all Catholics to admit any perſon for King, on the Queen's death, however near in blood, unleſs he would ſwear to promote their cauſe to the utmoſt of his power. But failing of ſucceſs, he procured a pardon from King James for all his paſt treaſons, and then immediately proceeded to commit new ones.

For in the firſt year of that monarch's reign was the execrable deſign of this day formed, though accidents deferred its execution. He, in the mean time, permitted no ſeverity againſt papiſts, excepting two prieſts who ſuffered for a treaſonable plot; ſpoke favourably of them to his Parliament, honoured ſeveral of them with acceſs to his perſon, with knighthood; with regards, that made ſome of his proteſtant ſubjects jealous. Yet did not all this hinder the conſpirators from purſuing ſteadily the moſt ſhocking deſign, that ever entered into the heart of man. A ſmall ſcruple indeed ſome of them had; that a few of their own communion muſt have died with the reſt. But this was ſoon removed by their confeſſors; and the holy ſacrament made the bond of ſo horrid an impiety. Meaſures were concerted for an inſurrection at home, for an invaſion from abroad to ſupport it: Prayers offered up, both here and at Rome, for the ſucceſs of their enterprize; which a good providence diſcovered, but a few hours before it was to have been executed. Then they broke out into a deſperate attempt of an open rebellion, in which ſome of them periſhed; ſome, that were taken, gloried in their deſign to the laſt; others indeed condemned themſelves; and a great part of their communion condemn them now, as is the uſual fate of unſucceſsful treaſons. Yet Garnet, who was executed for it, and owned himſelf privy to it, paſſes amongſt them for a ſaint and martyr. Teſmond, another Jeſuit concerned in it, eſcaping to Rome, was made Penitentiary to the Pope; who himſelf, as one of the ſame order affirms, was acquainted with the deſign, and had proper bulls ready to iſſue on the ſucceſs of it.

After

After this diſcovery, alarming as it was, the moſt moderate counſels were taken; and an oath formed, to diſtinguiſh the better ſort of them from the reſt; in which they were only to engage, that notwithſtanding any bull or diſpenſation from the Pope, they would bear true faith and allegiance to the King. Many amongſt them took this; but immediately what they had done was condemned at Rome: Blackwell, their Archprieſt here, was deprived of his dignity, for being one of them; and all catholics were commanded abſolutely to ſuffer death, if need were, rather than take the oath.

In the reign of King Charles the Firſt, the ſame prohibition was repeated: and the Iriſh maſſacre of ſo many thouſand proteſtants, in cold blood, gave a new proof of popiſh treachery and inhumanity. With a very ill grace did they pretend, after this, to diſtinguiſh themſelves for good ſubjects in the two next reigns: when to paſs over the popiſh plot in the former, the conduct of the latter too fully ſhowed, at what point all this boaſted loyalty was aimed. They had perverted that unhappy prince, King James the Second, to an enthuſiaſtic zeal for their faith, and of conſequence for reſtoring it here. In vain did he take the moſt ſolemn oaths to maintain our religion and liberties. He could not prevail on himſelf to put on the appearance of keeping them, even for a few years: but invaded the whole conſtitution with ſuch haſty ſteps to its ruin, that our fathers beheld popery ruſhing inſtantly upon them, armed with all the terrors of arbitrary power; and, beſides the ancient inſtances of its barbarity, they had a dreadful freſh one juſt before their eyes, in the miſerable baniſhment of their brethren, the French proteſtants, contrary to all faith, to all pity. But, juſt when every thing, which they feared, was beginning to fall on them in Ireland; then it pleaſed God to endear to us a ſecond time this day, by the landing of our great deliverer; who ſucceeded to the throne, left vacant; and from whom is derived to us, we hope, a perpetual ſecurity in our preſent happy eſtabliſhment.

Moved by this recital of the dreadful evils, which religious intolerance hath committed and attempted; ſome perhaps may accuſe religion itſelf, as hurtful to ſociety. And undoubtedly falſe notions of it may be detrimental, and ſometimes even pernicious. But ſo many falſe notions of parental affection,

conjugal tenderneſs, gratitude, every motive to action. Yet this was never thought an argument againſt the principles themſelves. And if any thing be fitted to do good and no harm on earth, true religion certainly is. Natural religion is univerſally acknowledged to be mild and humane. Chriſtianity indeed ſome have done their utmoſt to pervert. But let either the bittereſt zealot, or the moſt bigotted infidel, ſhow, if they can, one inſtance, in which the goſpel gives the leaſt pretence for pious cruelty. Every where it breathes mildneſs, patience, forbearance: enjoins Chriſtians, of ever ſo different opinions, to receive one another in mutual charity: and even, of thoſe who are no Chriſtians, it permits us not to judge hardly; much leſs to uſe them unmercifully. If then ſome, who profeſs this faith, will act in defiance to it, let them bear their condemnation. But to charge their guilt on Chriſtianity, would be like cenſuring the legal conſtitution of any government, becauſe they, who rebel againſt it, behave unjuſtifiably. For indeed the ſpirit of perſecution is rebellion againſt Chriſt, under pretence of a commiſſion from him: it is *the Man of Sin, ſitting as God in the temple of God**. And where it is not deſigned impiety, it is the groſſeſt ignorance, both of the attributes of our Maker, and the precepts of our Redeemer, as the words of the text expreſsly declare: *Theſe things will they do unto you, becauſe they have not known the Father, nor me.* And the remedy for this evil is, not caſting off the regard, which we owe to God, but eſtabliſhing juſt and worthy notions of his ſervice in the minds of men: which, in proportion as they prevail, will baniſh enthuſiaſm and ſuperſtition from off the earth: whereas, if true religion be once loſt, every abſurd opinion, as well as miſchievous practice, may ſpring up in its ſtead. If atheiſm could take place, it muſt viſibly be the ruin of ſociety. But it cannot. There is an irreſiſtible bent in the human mind to reverence an inviſible power: and if men are not directed to do it in a right manner, they will do it in a wrong. Therefore the certain conſequence of abandoning true piety, is becoming a prey to falſe. And accordingly the emiſſaries of the Church of Rome have never been either more active, or more ſucceſsful, than ſince the aſtoniſhing increaſe of profaneneſs, and indifference to religion,

* 1 Theſſ. ii. 3, 4.

ligion, amongſt us, have given them ſo unguarded an opening for the re-eſtabliſhing their ancient dominion.

Still how unjuſt ſoever it may be to think hardly of Chriſtianity on their account, yet at leaſt theſe corrupters of it, perhaps we may think, cannot well be abhorred too much, or treated too ſeverely. But God forbid, that we ſhould imitate, however provoked, what we condemn; or charge on every particular papiſt, what we cannot but charge on popery in general. Many of them doubtleſs are well-meaning perſons, from whom both the principles, and the practices above mentioned, are concealed, as much as ever they can, by artful diſguiſes, or bold denials; and who think in their conſciences, that nothing ſhould induce them to commit the crimes, of which their forefathers have been accuſed. Yet notwithſtanding, were that authority, in which they profeſs an implicit faith, to command their aſſiſtance in ever ſo wicked an enterprize, at a critical juncture; on what grounds the moſt unwilling of them all could refuſe, one doth not ſee. In the mean while indeed they may be much better perſons, than their religion, did they know the depths of it, would allow them to be. And even amongſt the worſt of them, great numbers may be entitled to our Saviour's plea for his crucifiers: *Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do**. But ſuch ignorant zeal, though it alleviates their guilt, increaſes the danger from them: and they muſt allow communities of a different faith, to defend themſelves againſt that Danger moſt watchfully.

Ours hath done it by penal ſtatutes, terrible in appearance, but extorted by the neceſſity of the times; and ſo entirely ſuſpended, as that neceſſity leſſened, that they, who have every where broke through all laws, divine and human, to deſtroy the proteſtant religion, without ſparing it in a ſingle inſtance, where they could ſuppreſs it with ſafety, have long enjoyed unmoleſted the exerciſe of their own, notwithſtanding ſo many legal proviſions to the contrary, notwithſtanding their numerous attempts againſt former government, notwithſtanding their general refuſal to own and give ſecurity to the preſent. God forbid, that we ſhould envy them this indulgence; God grant, they may learn to imitate our mildneſs!

* Luke xxiii. 34.

neſs! Of that indeed there is little hope. Yet ſtill let us continue to act, as Chriſtians ought; and add to the public lenity of our ſuperiors, every prudent inſtance of kind behaviour in private life; never indeed affecting or entering into dangerous intimacies with them, but never giving needleſs provocation, even to the worſt; much leſs grieving the better-minded, by upbraiding remembrances of paſt things. Let us in every other reſpect abſolutely forget all, that they have done or attempted; only not forget due thankfulneſs to God, that they have not ſucceeded hitherto; and due precaution that they may not ſucceed hereafter; either by open force, or ſuch private arts of increaſing the number of their proſelytes, as may enable them to uſe force when they will. For the ſpirit of that church, though ſtudiouſly concealed, is ſtill the ſame. Not one of the vileſt actions, done to ſerve it, have they ever by public authority condemned, liberal as they are of condemnations in other caſes; not one of the moſt extravagant claims, made in favour of it, have they ever diſowned. And they cannot diſown with common modeſty, though they force themſelves to do it ſometimes, that they hold all promiſes and oaths to be void, which they make to the prejudice of their religion or church: for it is the expreſs language of their infallible guides, their Popes and their councils. It is very true, their practices of late have not been ſo enormous, as formerly: the temper of mankind is milder; their influences on the princes of the earth is leſs; and they have the wiſdom not to threaten, while they cannot ſtrike. But remember, our days have known the bloody executions of Thorn, and the mercileſs baniſhments of Saltzburg; the inquiſition of Spain ſubſiſts in its full force; the impriſonments, the confiſcations, the enſlaving, the murdering of our proteſtant brethren in France, have been revived within theſe few years with the bittereſt fury, though entirely unprovoked. And if we will truſt thoſe, who continue to ſhow, by ſuch marks, what they are; our folly will deſerve every thing, which we can ſuffer.

Now what have we to ſecure us from all the errors, and all the cruelties, of this moſt corrupt and tyrannical church? Not one thing, under God, but the ſupport of the government, which we now enjoy; and have ſeen attacked by a formidable

midable rebellion, in favour of a bigotted member of that communion. How then ſhall we ſupport, and ſtrengthen effectually, an eſtabliſhment, ſo eſſential to our happineſs? By hearty and active loyalty, honeſt and diſintereſted public ſpirit, firm and friendly union; but above all, by ſerious repentance, and amendment of our ways, with fervent prayers to the great diſpoſer of all things for his protection. And may it pleaſe him to deliver us, in time to come, as, bleſſed be his name, he hath in time paſt; not for our righteouſneſs, but for his own mercies ſake; to *break the power of the ungodly and malicious* *; aboliſh perſecution, tyranny and injuſtice, amongſt men; and graciouſly haſten the promiſed time, when *the wolf ſhall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid*: when *none ſhall hurt or deſtroy in all his holy mountain; for the earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the Sea* †.

* Pſal. x. 17. † Iſa. xi. 6, 9.

SER.

SERMON CXXXIX.

THE DUTY OF SUBJECTION TO THE PUBLIC MAGISTRATE; AND THE SIN OF SPEAKING RASHLY OF THE POWERS THAT ARE.

Preached in the Pariſh Church of St Mary, Lambeth, *October* 25. 1761.

TIT. iii. 1, 2.

Put them in mind to be ſubject to principalities and powers, to obey magiſtrates; to be ready to every good work:
To ſpeak evil of no man; to be no brawlers, but gentle; ſhowing all meekneſs unto all men.

THIS is the firſt anniverſary of the day, on which we loſt, very unexpectedly, a ſovereign, under whoſe juſt and mild and prudent adminiſtration we had lived, in freedom, ſafety and plenty, above thirty-three years. The mercy of Providence, unworthy as we are of it, hath filled his place with a moſt pious and gracious, amiable and reſpectable prince; who hath hitherto given us cauſe to hope, from his government, for every thing that we can wiſh. Our joint thankſgivings have juſt now, with the greateſt reaſon, been offered up to God for ſo important a bleſſing; together with our earneſt prayers, which indeed we repeat as often as we aſſemble here, for his long life and proſperity. But the moſt acceptable expreſſion of our gratitude will be, to perform, every one of us, diligently the ſeveral duties of loyal ſubjects, that belong to our reſpective ſtations. And theſe the paſſage of ſcripture, which I have read to you, comprehends ſo fully, and ranges them in ſo natural an order, that explaining and enforcing the precepts of it, as they lie there, will give a ſufficient view of all that is incumbent on us in this manner.

Put

Put them in mind to be ſubject to principalities and powers, to obey magiſtrates. Theſe phraſes have the ſame meaning: only the variety of them ſerves to ſet forth the obligation the more completely, and preſs it the more earneſtly: as indeed there are few, that deſerve a greater regard.

Human kind, from early ages, have lived collected into large numbers: and our nature and circumſtances plainly require, that we ſhould. We experience an inward propenſion to aſſemble and unite: and are by the faculty of ſpeech peculiarly qualified for it. We have many affections, and the ſeeds of many virtues, planted in us; which a more ſolitary life would give us very little room to exerciſe or cultivate: and many wants and neceſſities belong to our condition, which nothing can tolerably well ſupply, but an extenſive intercourſe of man with man. We cannot therefore either improve or enjoy ourſelves, as God deſigned, but in ſociety: and ſociety cannot ſubſiſt, without a due ſubordination of one part of it to another; that is, without government and obedience. The appetites, the paſſions, the caprices of men, would be always leading them to diſquiet their neighbours, if they were not reſtrained by authority. And a public direction is further neceſſary, both for defence againſt external dangers, and for eſtabliſhing inward order in the community. For even the beſt meant endeavours of each particular for the general benefit, would be almoſt always ineffectual, and often prejudicial, unleſs they were conducted by the general wiſdom. Then beſides, the civil power is eminently uſeful, by the ſanctions of its laws, to what concerns us yet more nearly, the reformation of our morals, and bettering our tempers. For though rewards and puniſhments have no immediate efficacy to make a change within: yet regulating our behaviour will of courſe by degrees contribute to mend our hearts. Human laws indeed cannot extend to all our actions: but to many of the moſt material they can: putting it out of men's power to do the evil, which elſe they would, or ſtopping them ſhort before they are gone far: *ſaving* ſome *by fear**, making others wiſe by experience, extirpating the incorrigible; and obliging every one to ſet all around him a pattern of innocent and regular living. But then laſtly, as a right belief in God, and his va-

* Jude, verſe 23.

rious diſpenſations towards men, promotes, beyond all things, both the virtue and the happineſs of mankind; another chief advantage of good government is, that whereas without it, moſt men would either through ignorance be deſtitute of religious principles, or by their own folly, or the fraud of others, led into abſurd and pernicious ones; it kindly makes proviſion for them of a rational method of inſtruction and worſhip; not obtruding it on them by force, but propoſing and recommending it, which will always ſuffice; and thus they are guarded, at once, from the dreadful evils both of impiety and ſuperſtition; and carefully taught to diſcharge the duties, and bear the afflictions, of human life.

Government therefore being ſo powerfully conducive to the attainment of theſe moſt valuable ends, which doubtleſs our Maker deſigned to be attained, the eſtabliſhment of it in the world ought conſequently to be regarded, as a moſt important law of God and nature, directly flowing from the conſtitution of things. And what reaſon teaches, revelation expreſsly confirms; declaring, that the civil power is *the ordinance of God*; and they, who exerciſe it, *his miniſters of good to men* *: from which premiſes the Apoſtle's concluſion in the ſame place is undeniable; *wherefore ye muſt needs be ſubject, not only for wrath, but alſo for conſcience ſake* †. Whoever then refuſes due ſubmiſſion to the authority, which Providence hath placed him peaceably under; though we ought to judge of him as charitably as with reaſon we can, if he pleads conſcience for it; is, at leaſt undeſignedly, guilty of diſobeying the appointment of Heaven, in a matter of the utmoſt conſequence to the good of mankind. I do not, by this, enjoin obedience to whatever power may ſtart up, and maintain itſelf, in times of public confuſion, for a while, by the ſword; but to ſuch only, as is fully and quietly ſettled, and acknowledged by the general conſent of the community. Our duty becomes ſuch, in this caſe, only for the ſake of our common good. And therefore, not they who think they ought, and ſay they would protect us, but they who can and do, are to be owned and obeyed. The nature of the thing, and the frequent viciſſitudes of human affairs, requires abſolutely, that this be the rule; and all the world have ever admitted it, excepting a handful of

* Rom. xiii. 1, 2, 4. † Rom. xiii. 5.

of perſons in our own age and country; who undoubtedly deſerve both pity and eſteem, ſo far as they go upon principle; but whoſe notions, were they to ſpread, would produce inextricable confuſion throughout the earth.

And very happily ſcripture is as clear in this point, as reaſon. *There is no power*, ſaith St Paul, *but of God: the powers that be*, the ſeveral governments actually ſubſiſting in each nation, *are ordained of God. Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the power, reſiſteth the ordinances of God**. Again, St Peter directs all Chriſtians to *ſubmit themſelves to every ordinance of man*, every human eſtabliſhment, *for the Lord's ſake: for ſo is the will of God*†. And accordingly they did ſo from the beginning of the goſpel; and amidſt as many uſurpations and bad titles, in the Roman empire, as the hiſtory of any nation hath ever recorded, followed no other maxim, than that of obeying faithfully the authority, to which the Wiſdom of Heaven, ſuperintending all things, from time to time ſubjected them. But when perſons have owned a government, not only by receiving and claiming the benefits of it, but by taking ſolemn oaths to it, and joining in public prayers for its preſervation: one or both of which I preſume we have all done, theſe additional ties render diſloyalty afterwards, groſs perfidy and abandoned profligateneſs.

We cannot then reaſonably doubt, to whom our ſubmiſſion is due; and we can ſeldom, if ever, doubt, at leaſt in any point that will affect our practice, how far it is to be carried. If our ſuperiors command us to do any thing, which we cannot lawfully, *we ought to obey God rather than men*‡. But otherwiſe we are to act as they require us; and if they treat us hardly, or manage the concerns of the nation wrongly, we are to bear it with patience. For conſider; the affairs of government are always numerous and difficult; ſometimes uncommonly intangled and perplexed. They, who manage them, are liable to the ſame miſtakes, ſubject to the ſame paſſions, and expoſed to more temptations, than other men. Therefore not only miſcarriages and ill accidents will happen; but neglects and failures, partialities and grievances, muſt be expected in the behaviour of public perſons, as well as private. And whoever will not ſit down contented under ſome things of this

* Rom. xiii. 1, 2. † 1 Pet. ii. 13, 15. ‡ Acts v. 29.

ſort, reſolves in effect never to be contented at all, and demands a perfection from others, to which he cannot pretend himſelf. But then further, as there will be always ſomething amiſs in political conduct, ſo there will always, either through ill deſign or ignorance or inconſiderateneſs, be fault found with actions that deſerve it not; or the blame laid where it ſhould not. And though miſmanagements ought certainly to be rectified, when they can by lawful and prudent methods; and they who attempt this are intitled both to candid interpretation, and in caſes of moment, to aſſiſtance, from others: yet they ſhould examine themſelves very ſtrictly, and all who are concerned ſhould examine with care, not only whether they deſign well, but whether they conſider impartially, and judge rightly; whether they uſe allowable means to attain their imagined good ends; and whether, on the whole, they are not more likely to do harm, than ſervice.

But ſuppoſing oppoſition made with all theſe precautions, which it ſeldom is; and yet made ineffectually; if the point be of any great conſequence, without queſtion it is very unhappy. Yet ſtill, having recourſe to violent meaſures would bring on ſo many obvious miſchiefs, and for the moſt part ſuch multitudes of unforeſeen ones too, with ſo much uncertainty of making things better, and ſo dreadful a chance of making them one way or another worſe, that every wiſe as well as good man, if the caſe be in any degree tolerable, will much rather chuſe, to wait for a remedy from the providence of God, than think of applying deſperate ones of his own.

There is indeed a poſſibility, which, but for a peculiar caſe which was our own, it would ſcarce be proper to mention, that government may be ſo entirely perverted from its original deſign, by ſome who ſhare in it; ſuch exorbitant powers uſurped, and ſo deſtructive an uſe made of them, that the duty of obedience muſt give way to that of ſelf-preſervation. But this can be only when the neceſſity is extreme, and the evil inſupportable; the danger of it imminent, and by every other way unavoidable; the relief confeſſedly real, and viſibly within reach. Such were the circumſtances of our fathers at the Revolution. But perſons are not to imagine, that ſuch frequently happen; or that any thing like them happens, as often as they fancy, or even feel, a few inconveniencies;

conveniences; but to bear them, were they many and heavy, with a virtuous patience and ſacred regard to the public tranquillity. For certainly the government of the cruel and vicious emperor Nero was extremely bad, when St Paul, notwithſtanding, enjoined ſo ſtrongly dutiful obedience to it, as you may read in the thirteenth chapter of his epiſtle to the Romans. How religiouſly then, and how cheerfully, ought we to obey thoſe, who have the rule over us; ſince undeniably the truth is, and long experience ought to extinguiſh all ſuſpicion to the contrary, that they have not the leaſt deſign of hurting us in any one reſpect, but a ſincere deſire of ſecuring and promoting all our intereſts, domeſtic and foreign; that almoſt all the inconveniences, which we have ſuffered, and the burdens, that we undergo, have ariſen from the wickedneſs or folly of the nations round us, or from our own; that our eſtabliſhed religion is purer, our liberty greater, our property ſafer, than that of any other people upon earth; that whatever in our condition may want to be rectified and improved, we may do it by peaceful methods, whenever we agree upon it; that we have no one good effect to promiſe ourſelves from diſloyal attempts; but a ſure proſpect, were they to ſucceed, of every evil of every kind, to ourſelves and our poſterity.

In the ſecond part of the text, the apoſtle proceeds from obedience, the primary duty of ſubjects, as ſuch, to the other, and conſequential parts of their behaviour under government. And here his firſt rule is a very comprehenſive one, that they *be ready to every good work:* in general, to fulfil all the obligations of life; in particular, thoſe of their own ſtation. An univerſal regard to religion and piety, juſtice and benevolence, ſobriety and temperance, is the very groundwork of ſocial happineſs. It gives courage and ſpirit, health and plenty; truſt and union at home, reſpect and honour abroad: it keeps proſperity from being dangerous, and fills adverſity with comfort and hope. But then, beſides the common ties, which bind all men, the apoſtle includes in this precept, what he could not ſo well mention ſingly, the particular ties of each man, belonging to his reſpective ſituation and employment. It requires therefore, that perſons in authority be faithful to their truſt, watchful and diligent, upright and diſintereſted; or to ſpeak in the language of ſcripture, *Men of truth, fearing God,*

God, hating covetouſneſs * : that perſons of quality and fortune acknowledge their ſubjection to the ſame laws, human and divine, with their inferiors; and be careful to uſe the advantageous ground, upon which they ſtand, chiefly to pour down benefits, and ſhed abroad good influences, on all beneath them; and laſtly, that thoſe, who are of lower eſtate be content with their condition, yet induſtrious by honeſt means to better it; pay reſpect to their ſuperiors in word and deed, proportionably to their degree, and *render to all their dues; fear, to whom fear is due, honour, to whom honour* †. Thus, by a regular ſubordination and mutual ſerviceableneſs, every one will concur to make the weight of government eaſy to thoſe, who ſuſtain it; and the benefits great to all, that are placed under it. And the bleſſing of Heaven will not fail to crown the virtuous endeavours of ſuch a people with ſucceſs.

But though every good work is beneficial to ſociety, and every ſinful one detrimental: yet ſome ſins are more directly pernicious, than others: and require a more eſpecial caution to be given againſt them. Such are the two, which uſually go together, calumny and faction. Theſe therefore the apoſtle prohibits eſpecially, in the following part of the text: *To ſpeak evil of no man, to be no brawlers.*

The original word, in the former of theſe rules, being that, from which the name of blaſphemy is derived, commonly denotes in ſcripture, uſing reproachful language of thoſe, who are peculiarly intitled to reſpect and reverence; as, in the firſt place, the great God; and, in a lower ſenſe, perſons who bear his authority on earth. Conſidering therefore, to what point the paſſage before us relates, we muſt apprehend this injunction to be directed principally againſt the wickedneſs of ſuch, as St Peter ſaith, *are not afraid*, or, tranſlating literally, *do not tremble, to ſpeak evil of dignities* ‡: where again the word is, to *blaſpheme*. Here then St Paul muſt be underſtood to command, that we neither allow ourſelves, nor encourage others, in diſreſpectful and injurious expreſſions concerning our rulers, whether ſupreme or ſubordinate; but preſerve in our minds, and thoſe of all men, ſo far as we can, that honour and regard for them, which is the ſtrongeſt bond of government, of peace and order. In charity it muſt be ſuppoſed, that few of the many,

* Exod. xviii. 21. † Rom. xiii. 7. ‡ 2 Pet. ii. 10.

many, who violate this precept, do it with ill deſign. But at beſt, for perſons to entertain and ſpread notions to the diſadvantage of their ſuperiors, which, in the caſe of an equal to whom they wiſhed well, they would immediately ſee were groundleſs, and, it may be, abſurd, is a very criminal thoughtleſſneſs; and often produces moſt unhappy effects. Therefore, when we hear ſuch things ſaid, we ſhould always reflect, how many there are, whom prepoſſeſſion, or intereſt, or reſentment, may induce to report untruths or uncertainties; how many others do the ſame thing from mere wantonneſs of invention, or deſire to appear knowing; and indeed, how eaſily facts, or material circumſtances, are, without intention, miſrelated or miſunderſtood. We ſhould call to mind, whether we have not, perhaps more than once before now, been led into a firm belief of many a ſtory, for which we have afterwards been convinced there was never the leaſt foundation; and learn from thence a prudent diſtruſt for the future. Nay further ſtill, before we paſs our judgment ſo freely on the characters of public perſons, and the adminiſtration of public affairs, we ſhould ſpend a little time in judging ourſelves; and conſidering well, not only whether we are ſo impartial and candid as we ought, but whether we have indeed a ſufficient capacity, and ſufficient information, to determine at all about ſuch matters. Unleſs we can be ſure of this, about which multitudes, we find, are daily miſtaken; we ſhould be very fearful of venturing beyond our depth; or, in ſcripture language, *exerciſing ourſelves in great matters, which are too high for us* *, and ought in many caſes to go but little further, than our good wiſhes and prayers; leaving the reſt to thoſe that are intruſted with it, and *ſtudying to be quiet, and do our own buſineſs* †.

But reproachful diſcourſe, though our ſuperiors be ſpared in it, is fully miſchievous enough, to deſerve being included, as doubtleſs the apoſtle deſigned it ſhould, in his general prohibition of evil-ſpeaking. Private quarrels, ariſing from this ſource, have often produced very fatal public diſſentions. And were it never to have that ill effect, it would ſtill have many others of the worſt kind. The good opinion of thoſe, amongſt whom we live, is by nature, and with great reaſon, extremely dear to us: and robbing us of it is taking from us one

* Pſal. cxxxi. 2. † 1 Theſſ. iv. 11.

one of the chief things, that make life agreeable. Every one feels this in his own caſe. No injury occaſions bitterer uneaſineſs, or keener reſentments; yet none is more frequently done: not only in anger, which however, were it the beſt grounded in the world, is by no means an excuſe for ſaying juſt what one will; but in perfect good humour, heedleſsly and gaily, and for mere want of ſomething elſe to ſay. An offence, committed with ſo little ſcruple, is uſually retaliated with juſt as little. And thus the cruelleſt and moſt barbarous imputations, ſometimes obliquely hinted at, others directly ſpoken out, make up a great part of the entertainment of converſation. They, who pretend to condemn them, hearken to them, and repeat them notwithſtanding: and almoſt every body goes on, more or leſs, contributing their ſhare to what they complain of, all the while, moſt heavily. Now though all the ill things, that we tell of others, were true; yet both Chriſtian charity, and common humanity, would forbid the needleſs publication of them. And one ſhould think private intereſt too might incline us to ſet the example of ſuch forbearance: as we ourſelves either have, or may have, occaſion for gentle treatment in return, and a friendly veil to be drawn over our failings. But if a report of this kind be falſe; then the raiſing it, and in proportion the carrying it on, is doing a moſt heinous injury to an innocent perſon; which may ſpread we know not how far, and laſt we know not how long, and do him we know not what harm; without our being able, were we willing afterwards, to reſtore to him, at all completely, the good name that we have taken from him: which yet we muſt heartily endeavour to do, whatever ſhame we may bring upon ourſelves by it, before we can hope for our Maker's forgiveneſs.

The ſecond prohibition of the apoſtle is levelled againſt the vehement ſpirit of party and faction: *To be no brawlers*, not contentious. Doubtleſs there may be differences of opinion and conduct, about national concerns, of ſuch importance, that every one ought to intereſt himſelf in them, and even zealouſly. But then it ſhould be done upon reaſonable grounds; and without paſſion or bitterneſs. We ſhould imagine nothing to be of greater moment, than it really is. We ſhould neither ſpeak nor think worſe of the oppoſite ſide, than we find, on a cool inquiry, they deſerve: we ſhould judge of no man's character,

racter, by the hurtful consequences, either of his notions or his behaviour; if there be any reason to think, that he doth not see them: we should on no account violate the laws of truth, justice and humanity, to distress the most obstinate adversary; or to gain the most favourite and material point. In matters of more indifference, the contest, if there is any, should in all reason be carried on with less warmth; and every one be freely allowed to follow his own way of thinking, and promote the interest of his own friends, without offence. To this equitable temper we should first form our own minds, and then study to introduce it amongst others: making it our business to diminish the subject, and narrow the bounds, of contention; and each labouring to abate the vehemence of his own side, with whom he may hope to have credit. But how small soever his success may be in that, each may at least watch over himself; be on his guard against over-great credulity; resist the temptation of countenancing serviceable falsehoods; avoid, as much as possible, whatever may seem an unkind action, and most resolutely abstain from doing an unjust one. For whatever is dishonourable and base, ill-natured or uncharitable, in our oppofers, is so in us; neither our passions, nor our interests, nor the common practice of the world, is the proper rule of our behaviour, or will justify it another day before the holy Judge of the whole earth. All these things are extremely plain; every body owns them; yet few or none regard them. Bad persons have their ends to serve by transgressing bounds; very good persons are enticed, or provoked, to go on insensibly much further than they should; and each side is so full of indignation at the faults of the other, that they overlook their own entirely. The consequence of this is, that almost every body applying what is said against the iniquities of party, not at all to reform themselves, but solely to load their adversaries with imputations, they grow worse by what is intended to make them better; whereas we should learn from the failings of others, whom we are but too like, to examine, whether we are not guilty of some of the same; and readily grant mutual forgiveness to those common errors, which we have all great need to be forgiven by our Maker. Thus we should soon quiet and subdue this evil spirit; which in private life makes men disagreeable and injurious, intemperate and riotous, idle and negligent of their pro-

per buſineſs; and whilſt it fills their minds with other diſtinctions, often unmeaning, yet always miſchievous; deſtroys from off the the earth, in proportion as it prevails, the moſt important and neceſſary of all diſtinctions, that between good perſons and bad. For amongſt the zealots on every ſide, the loweſt and the vileſt creature, that is uſeful to their cauſe, or even but noiſy for it, ſhall meet with high favour; and the worthieſt who oppoſes them, be it ever ſo great a trifle, or for ever ſo ſtrong reaſons, ſhall not only be ſlighted, but ill treated and abhorred. Then for public affairs: the effect of this unhappy temper on them is, if poſſible, ſtill worſe. The end of ſociety and government is to unite men in promoting their general intereſt; and the aim of party is to diſunite them entirely. The whole ſtudy of each faction is to advance their own ſeparate ſtrength, overlooking the public welfare; to prevent the other from doing any thing beneficial or popular, to deceive or force them into meaſures abſurd and pernicious; then to accuſe them for the omiſſions or miſtakes, nay the unavoidable inconveniencies, of which the accuſers themſelves have been the cauſe. Thus they labour unwearyedly the ruin of one another; and too frequently, rather than fail of it, will riſque, or even contrive, the ruin of the whole. For this wicked vehemence increaſes in men by unexpected and aſtoniſhing degrees; and the wiſeſt, when they once give way to it, cannot foreſee how far it may carry them, amidſt ſuch a number of things to provoke, or entice, or entangle them ſo, that they may come to do at length, what they leaſt thought of, nay, what they moſt abominated. But though party quarrels produce every where very hurtful conſequences; yet, as they have room for riſing to the greateſt heights, ſo they are capable of doing the greateſt harm, in countries of civil and religious freedom; the happineſs of which, though on all other accounts invaluable, is grievouſly ſubject to this one alloy; that the bold and active ſpirit, which naturally accompanies liberty, hurries men on, in various inſtances, to wild behaviour; and particularly carries public diſputes to moſt immoral and dangerous lengths. Here therefore St Paul's advice * is of the utmoſt importance. God be thanked, that we have followed it much better of late, than formerly: and God

* Gal. v. 14, 15, 16.

God grant, that we never relapſe into wrong behaviour on this head again. *Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only uſe not your liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh, but by love ſerve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word: Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.*

This rule of being mutually ſerviceable by love, is the ſame, in effect, with that which the laſt words of the text preſcribe; that we ſhould be *gentle, ſhewing all meekneſs unto all men.* Our paſſions frequently prompt us, not only to do the contrary, but even to defend it. And yet one ſhould think it might be eaſily ſeen, that a proneneſs to reſent and diſoblige, take things amiſs, and do things for others to take amiſs, whatever ill-natured pleaſure there may be in it juſt at the time, is neither a happy, nor a virtuous diſpoſition; much leſs one allowed by the goſpel towards *our brethren, for whom Chriſt died**: but that indulging it muſt gradually ſour our tempers, hurt our healths, at leaſt deſtroy our comfort: beſides the ample return for it, that we ſhall be too likely to meet with from the world; and the dreadful guilt, that we incur by it in the ſight of God. So that whatever difference of intereſts there may be in other reſpects, yet in one point the intereſt of all men is clearly the ſame: that gentleneſs and meekneſs be exerciſed, good-nature and obliging behaviour ſtudiouſly cultivated. This is not only the way to enjoy life, but to act rightly in it. Such a turn of mind will enable us, and no other can, to judge reaſonably both of things and perſons; to diſcern how far men's actions and deſigns are juſtifiable or otherwiſe; and what allowance ought to be made, as often ſurely not a little ought, for early prejudices, warm paſſions, ſtrong provocations, alluring proſpects, eaſy miſtakes, and undeſigned neglects. Then further, preſerving our own tempers calm is the ſureſt method to compoſe and win upon others: to open their eyes, to conciliate their eſteem; and, which is the great point, that we ſhould have in our view, to make all worthy perſons on all ſides, of whom it may be hoped there are many more, than we can ſometimes believe, agree with one another in whatever is of importance, and bear with one another in whatever is not. With the utmoſt reaſon therefore did the apoſtle give this direction in the laſt place, of *ſhowing all meek-*

* Rom. xiv. 15.

neſs unto all men, as finiſhing the character of a good ſubject, and providing completely for the happineſs of a nation: that every one ſhould *follow the things, which make for peace**; carry himſelf with humanity, and prudent friendlineſs, to each of his fellow-ſubjects, without exception; moderate his juſteſt zeal with equal charity; and copy, in the whole of his conduct, that moſt beautiful and excellent character of *Mordecai*, in the laſt verſe of the book of Eſther; that he was *accepted of the multitude of his brethren, ſeeking the wealth of his people, and ſpeaking peace to all his ſeed*. God grant us to be every one thus minded; and reward us with his bleſſings, on ourſelves, our king, and the whole royal family through Jeſus Chriſt, our Lord. Amen.

* Rom. xiv. 19.

SER-

SERMON CXL.

CONFIRMATION OF DIVINE AUTHORITY; AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN PROMOTING PIETY AND VIRTUE.

ACTS viii. 17.

Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghoſt.

THE hiſtory, to which theſe words belong, is this: Philip the deacon, ordained at the ſame time with St Stephen, had converted and baptized the people of Samaria: which the apoſtles at Jeruſalem hearing, ſent down to them Peter and John, two of their own body; who, by prayer, accompanied with impoſition of hands, obtained for them a greater degree, than they had yet received, of the ſacred influences of the Divine Spirit; which undoubtedly was done on their ſignifying in ſome manner, ſo as to be underſtood, their adherence to the engagement, into which they had entered at their baptiſm.

From this and the like inſtances of the practice of the apoſtles, is derived, what biſhops, their ſucceſſors, though every way beyond compariſon inferior to them, have practiſed ever ſince, and which we now call Confirmation. Preaching was common to all ranks of miniſters: baptizing was performed uſually by the lower rank; but, perhaps to maintain a due ſubordination, it was reſerved to the higheſt, by prayer and laying on of hands, to communicate further meaſures of the Holy Ghoſt. It was indeed peculiar to the apoſtles, that on their interceſſion, his extraordinary and miraculous gifts were beſtowed; which continued in the church no longer than the need of them did; nor can we ſuppoſe, that all were partakers of them. But unqueſtionably by their petitions they procured, for every ſincere convert, a much more valuable, though leſs remarkable bleſſing, of univerſal and perpetual neceſſity, his ordinary and ſaving graces.

For

For theſe therefore, after their example, truſting that God will have regard, not to our unworthineſs, but to the purpoſes of mercy which he hath appointed us to ſerve, we interceed now, when perſons take upon themſelves the vow of their baptiſm. For this good end being now come amongſt you, though I doubt not but your miniſters have given you proper inſtructions on the occaſion; yet I am deſirous of adding ſomewhat further, which may not only acquaint more fully thoſe, who are eſpecially concerned, with the nature of what they are about to do, but remind you all of the obligations, which Chriſtianity lays upon you. And I cannot perform it better, than by explaining to you the office of Confirmation, to which you may turn in your prayer-books, where it ſtands immediately after the catechiſm.[1]

There you will ſee, in the firſt place, a preface, directed to be read; in which notice is given, that *for the more edifying of ſuch as ſhall receive confirmation*, it ſhall be adminiſtered to none but thoſe, *who can anſwer to the queſtions of the catechiſm* preceding: that ſo *children* may *come to years of* ſome *diſcretion*, and learn what the promiſe made for them in baptiſm was, before they are called upon to *ratify and confirm it before the church with their own conſent*, and to engage *that they will obſerve it.*

Prayers may be offered up for infants with very good effect. Promiſes may be made in their name by ſuch as are authoriſed to act for them; eſpecially when the things promiſed are for their intereſt, and will be their duty; which is the caſe of thoſe in baptiſm. But no perſons ought to make promiſes for themſelves, till they reaſonably well underſtand the nature of them, and are capable of forming ſerious purpoſes. Therefore, in the preſent caſe, being able to ſay the words of their catechiſm is by no means enough, without a competent general knowledge of their meaning, and intention of behaving as it requires them; which doubtleſs they are ſuppoſed to have at the ſame time. And if they have not; making a profeſſion of it, is declaring with their mouths what they feel not in their hearts at the inſtant, and will much leſs reflect upon afterwards; it is hoping to pleaſe God by the empty outward performance of a religious rite, from which if they had been with-held till they were duly qualified, their

ſouls

ſouls might have been affected, and their conduct influenced by it, as long as they lived.

Therefore I hope and beg, that neither miniſters nor parents will be too eager for bringing children very early to confirmation; but firſt teach them carefully, to know their duty ſufficiently, and reſolve upon the practice of it heartily; then introduce them to this ordinance; which they ſhall not fail to have opportunities of attending in their neighbourhood, from time to time, ſo long as God continues my life and ſtrength.

But as there are ſome too young for confirmation, ſome alſo may be thought too old; eſpecially, if they have received the holy ſacrament without it. Now there are not indeed all the ſame reaſons for the confirmation of ſuch, as of others; nor hath the church, I believe, determined any thing about their caſe, as it might be thought unlikely to happen. But ſtill, ſince it doth happen too frequently, that perſons were not able, or have neglected, to apply for this purpoſe; ſo whenever they apply, as by doing it they expreſs a deſire to *fulfil all righteouſneſs* *; and may certainly receive benefit, both from the profeſſion and the prayers, appointed in the office: my judgment is, that they ſhould not be rejected, but encouraged.

Only I muſt intreat you to obſerve, that when you take thus on yourſelves the engagement of leading a Chriſtian life, you are to take it once for all; and no more to think of ever being confirmed a ſecond time, than of being baptized a ſecond time.

After directing, who are to be confirmed; the office goes on to direct, how they are to be confirmed. And here, the biſhop is to begin with aſking every one of thoſe, who offer themſelves, whether they *do, in the preſence of God and of the congregation, renew in their own perſons the ſolemn vow of their baptiſm; acknowledging themſelves bound to believe and to perform all thoſe things, which their god-fathers and god-mothers then undertook for them.* On which they are each of them to anſwer, with an audible voice, *I do.*

Now the things, promiſed in our name, were, to renounce whatever God hath forbidden, to believe what He hath taught, and

* Matth. iii. 15.

and to practise what He hath commanded. Nobody can promise for infants absolutely, that they shall do these things; but only, that they shall be instructed and admonished to do them: and, it is hoped, not in vain. This instruction and admonition, parents are obliged by nature to give; and if they do it effectually, god-fathers and god-mothers have no further concern, than to be heartily glad of it. But if the former fail, the latter must supply the failure, as far as they have opportunity of doing it with any reasonable prospect of success. For they were intended, not to release the parents from the care of their children, which nothing can: but for a double security, in a case of such importance.

If nothing at all had been promised in our names, we had still been bound, as soon as we were capable of it, to believe in God, and obey him. But we are more early and more firmly bound, as not only this hath been promised for us, but care hath been taken to make us sensible of our obligation to perform it; which obligation therefore, persons are called upon, in the question under consideration, to ratify and confirm. And great cause have they to answer, that they do. For doing it is a duty, on which their eternal felicity peculiarly depends; as a little attention to what I am about to say will clearly show you.

Our first parents even while they were innocent, had no title to happiness, or to existence, but from God's notification of his good pleasure; which being conditional, when they fell, they lost it; and derived to us a corrupt and mortal nature, intitled to nothing; as both the diseases and the poverty of ancestors often descend to their distant posterity. This bad condition we fail not, from our first use of reason, to make worse, in a greater or less degree, by actual transgressions; and so personally deserve the displeasure, instead of favour, of him who made us. Yet we may hope, that, as He is good, He will on our repentance forgive us. But then, as He is also just and wise, and the Ruler of the world; we could never know with certainty, of ourselves, what his justice and wisdom and the honour of his government might require of Him with respect to sinners; whether he would pardon great offences at all; and whether He would reward those, whom He might be pleased not to punish. But most happily the revelation of his holy word hath cleared up all these doubts of unassisted

unaſſiſted reaſon; and offered to the worſt of ſinners, on the condition of faith in Chriſt, added to repentance, and productive of good works (for all which He is ready to enable us,) a covenant of pardon for ſins paſt, aſſiſtance againſt ſin for the future, and eternal life in return for a ſincere, though imperfect, and totally undeſerving, obedience.

The method of entering into this covenant is, being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt: that is, into the acknowledgement of the myſterious union and joint authority of theſe three; and of the diſtinct offices, which they have undertaken for our ſalvation; together with a faithful engagement of paying ſuitable regard to each of them. In this appointment of baptiſm, the waſhing with water aptly ſignifies, both our promiſe to preſerve ourſelves, with the beſt care we can, pure from the defilement of ſin, and God's promiſe to conſider us, as free from the guilt of it. Baptiſm then, through his mercy, ſecures infants from the bad conſequences of Adam's tranſgreſſion, giving them a new title to the immortality which he loſt. It alſo ſecures, to perſons grown up, the intire forgiveneſs of their own tranſgreſſions, on the terms juſt mentioned. But then, in order to receive theſe benefits, we muſt lay our claim to the covenant, which conveys them: we muſt ratify, as ſoon as we are able, what was promiſed in our name by others before we were able; and done for us then, only on preſumption that we would make it our own deed afterwards. For if we neglect, and appear to renounce our part of the covenant, we have plainly not the leaſt right to God's performing his: but we remain in our ſins, and *Chriſt ſhall profit us nothing* *.

You ſee then of what unſpeakable importance it is, that we take on ourſelves the vow of our baptiſm. And it is very fit and uſeful that we ſhould take it in ſuch form and manner as the office preſcribes. It is fit, that when perſons have been properly inſtructed by the care of their parents, friends, and miniſters, they ſhould, with joyful gratitude, acknowledge them to have faithfully performed that kindeſt duty. It is fit, that before they are admitted by the Church of Chriſt to the holy communion, they ſhould give public aſſurance to the church of their Chriſtian belief and Chriſtian purpoſes. This

* Gal. v. 2.

may alſo be extremely uſeful to themſelves. For conſider; young perſons are juſt entering into a world of temptations; with no experience, and little knowledge to guard them; and much youthful raſhneſs to expoſe them. The authority of others over them is beginning to leſſen, their own paſſions to increaſe, *evil communication* to have great opportunities of *corrupting good manners* *; and ſtrong impreſſions, of one kind or another, will be made on them very ſoon. What can then be more neceſſary, or more likely to preſerve their innocence, than to form the moſt deliberate reſolutions of acting right; and to declare them in a manner, thus adapted to move them at the time, and be remembered by them afterwards; in the preſence of God, of a number of his miniſters, and of a large congregation of his people, aſſembled with more than ordinary ſolemnity for that very purpoſe?

But then you, that are to be confirmed, muſt either do your own part, or the whole of this preparation will be utterly thrown away upon you. If you make the anſwer, which is directed, without ſincerity, it is lying to God: if you make it without attention, it is trifling with him. Watch over your hearts therefore, and let them go along with your lips. The two ſhort words, I DO, are ſoon ſaid; but they comprehend much in them. Whoever uſes them on this occaſion, ſaith in effect as follows: "I DO heartily renounce all the temptations "of the devil; all the unlawful pleaſures, profits, and honours of the world; all the immoral gratifications of the "fleſh. I DO ſincerely believe, and will conſtantly profeſs, "all the articles of the Chriſtian faith. I DO firmly reſolve "to keep all God's commandments all the days of my life; "to love and honour him; to pray to Him and praiſe Him "daily in private; to attend conſcientiouſly on the public "worſhip and inſtruction, which he hath appointed; to approach his holy table, as ſoon as I can qualify myſelf for "doing it worthily; to ſubmit to his bleſſed will meekly and "patiently in all things; to ſet him ever before my eyes, and "acknowledge him in all my ways. I DO further reſolve, in "the whole courſe of my behaviour amongſt my fellow-creatures to *do juſtly*, *love mercy* †, ſpeak truth, be diligent and "uſeful in my ſtation, dutiful to my ſuperiors, condeſcending "to

* 1 Cor. xv. 33. † Mic. vi. 8.

"to those beneath me, friendly to my equals; careful, through "all the relations of life, to act as the nature of them re-"quires, and conduct myself so to all men, as I should think "it reasonable that they should to me in the like case. Fur-"ther yet; I DO resolve, in the government of myself, to be "modest, sober, temperate, mild, humble, contented; to re-"strain every passion and appetite within due bounds; and to "set my heart chiefly, not on the sensible enjoyments of this "transitory world, but the spiritual happiness of the future "endless one. Lastly, I DO resolve, whenever I fail in any "of these duties, as I am sensible I have, and must fear I "shall, to confess it before God with unfeigned concern, to "apply for his promised pardon in the name of his blessed "Son, to beg the promised assistance of his Holy Spirit; and "in that strength, not my own, to strive against my faults, "and watch over my steps with redoubled care."

Observe then, It is not gloominess and melancholy, that religion calls you to: it is not useless austerity, and abstinence from things lawful and safe; it is not extravagant flights and raptures: it is not unmeaning or unedifying forms and ceremonies: much less is it bitterness against those who differ from you. But the forementioned unquestionable substantial duties are the things to which you bind yourselves, when you pronounce the awful words, I DO. Utter them then with the truest seriousness; and say to yourselves, each of you, afterwards, as Moses did to the Jews, *Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, to walk in his ways and keep his statutes, and to hearken to his voice: and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his; that thou shouldst keep all his commandments, and be holy unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken* *. It is a certain truth, call it therefore often to mind, and fix it in your souls, that if breaking a solemn promise to men be a sin; breaking that which you make thus deliberately to God, would be unspeakably a greater sin.

But let us now proceed to the next part of the office; in which, after persons have confirmed and ratified the vow of their baptism, prayers are offered up, that God would confirm and strengthen them in their purpose: on both which accounts this appointment is called Confirmation.

* Deut. xxvi. 17, 18, 19.

Scripture teaches, and ſad experience proves, that of *ourſelves we can do nothing; are not ſufficient** for the diſcharge of our duty, without God's continual aid: by which he can certainly influence our minds, without hurting our natural freedom of will, and even without our perceiving it: for we can influence our fellow-creatures ſo. Nor is it any injuſtice in him to require of us what exceeds our ability, ſince he is ready to ſupply the want of it. Indeed, on the contrary, as this method of treating us is excellently fitted both to keep us humble, and yet to give us courage, uſing it is evidently worthy of God. But then, as none can have reaſon to expect his help, but thoſe who earneſtly deſire it, ſo he hath promiſed to *give the Holy Spirit* only *to them that aſk him*†. And to unite Chriſtians more in love to each other, and incline them more to aſſemble for public worſhip, our bleſſed Redeemer hath eſpecially promiſed, that *where two or three* of them *are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midſt of them*‡. And further ſtill, to promote a due regard in his people to their teachers and rulers, the ſacred writings aſcribe a peculiar efficacy to their praying over thoſe who are committed to their charge. Even under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, the family of Aaron were told, that *them the Lord had ſeparated to miniſter unto him, and to bleſs in the name of the Lord*§: *and they ſhall put my name*, ſaith God, *upon the children of Iſrael, and I will bleſs them* ||. No wonder then, if under the Chriſtian diſpenſation we read, but juſt before the text, that the apoſtles, *when they were come down to* Samaria, *prayed for* the new-baptized converts, *that they might receive the Holy Ghoſt*; and in the text, that they did receive it accordingly.

Therefore, purſuant to theſe great authorities, here is, on the preſent occaſion, a number of young diſciples, about to run the ſame common race, met together to pray for themſelves and one another: here is a number of elder Chriſtians, who have experienced the dangers of life, met to pray for thoſe who are juſt entering into them: here are alſo God's miniſters, purpoſely come, to intercede with him in their behalf: and ſurely we may hope, their joint and fervent petitions will avail, and be effectual,

They

* John xv. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 5. † Luke xi. 13. ‡ Matth. xviii. 20.
§ Deut. x. 8. xxi. 5. || Numb. vi. 27.

They begin, as they ought, with acknowledging, and in ſcripture words, that *our help is in the name of the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth*: it is not in man to direct his own ſteps* †; but his Creator only can preſerve him. Then we go on to pronounce *the name of the Lord bleſſed, henceforth world without end,* for his readineſs to beſtow on us the grace we want. And laſtly, in confidence of his goodneſs, we intreat him to *hear our prayers, and let our cry come unto him* ‡.

After theſe preparatory ejaculations, and the uſual admonition to be attentive, *Let us pray;* comes a longer act of devotion, which firſt commemorates God's mercy already beſtowed, then petitions for an increaſe of it. The commemoration ſets forth, that he *hath regenerated theſe his ſervants by water and the Holy Ghoſt:* that is, intitled them by baptiſm to the enlivening influences of the Spirit, and ſo, as it were, begotten them again into a ſtate, inexpreſſibly happier than their natural one; a covenant-ſtate, in which God will conſider them, whilſt they keep their engagements, with peculiar love, as his dear children. It follows, that he *hath given unto them forgiveneſs of all their ſins;* meaning, that He hath given them aſſurance of it, on the gracious terms of the goſpel. But that every one of them hath actually received it, by complying with thoſe terms ſince he ſinned laſt, though we may charitably hope, we cannot preſume to affirm: nor were theſe words intended to affirm it; as the known doctrine of the Church of England fully proves. And therefore let no one miſunderſtand this expreſſion in the office, which hath parallel ones in the New Teſtament ‖, ſo as either to cenſure it, or delude himſelf with a fatal imagination, that any thing ſaid over him can poſſibly convey to him a pardon of ſins, for which he is not truly penitent. We only acknowledge, with due thankfulneſs, that God hath done his part: but which of the congregation have done theirs, their own conſciences muſt tell them.

After this commemoration, we go on to requeſt for the perſons before us, that God would ſtrengthen them againſt all temptation, and ſupport them under all affliction, by *the Holy Ghoſt the Comforter, and daily increaſe in them his manifold gifts of*

* Pſal. cxxiv. 8. † Jer. x. 23. ‡ Pſal. cii. 1. ‖ Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14.

of grace: which gifts we proceed to enumerate in seven particulars, taken from the Prophet Isaiah *; by whom they are ascribed to our blessed Redeemer: but as *the same mind* ought *to be in us, which was in Christ Jesus* †, a petition for them was used, in the office of Confirmation, 1400 years ago, if not sooner. The separate meaning of each of the seven, it is neither easy nor needful to determine with certainty. For indeed, if no more was designed, than to express very fully and strongly, by various words of nearly the same import, a pious and moral temper of mind: this is a manner of speaking both common and emphatical. But each of them may be taken in a distinct sense of its own. And thus we may beg for these our fellow-christians, a *spirit of wisdom*, to aim at the right end, the salvation of their souls: and *of understanding*, to pursue it by right means; *of counsel*, to form good purposes; and of *ghostly* or spiritual *strength*, to execute them: of useful *knowledge* in the doctrines of religion; *and true godliness*, disposing them to a proper use of it. But chiefly, though lastly, we pray, that they may be *filled with the Spirit of God's holy fear*; with that reverence of him, as the greatest and purest and best of beings, the rightful proprietor and just Judge of all, which will effectually excite them to whatever they are concerned to believe or do. For *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom* ‡.

Having concluded this prayer for them all in general, the Bishop implores the Divine Protection and grace for each one, or each pair of them, in particular: that as he is already God's professed child and servant, by the recognition which he hath just made of his baptismal covenant, so *he may continue his for ever*, by faithfully keeping it: and, far from decaying, *daily increase in his holy Spirit*, that is, in the fruits of the Spirit, piety and virtue, *more and more*; making greater and quicker advances in them, as life goes on, until he come to that decisive hour, when his portion shall be unchangeable in God's everlasting kingdom.

And, along with the utterance of these solemn words, he lays his hand on each of their heads; a ceremony used from the earliest ages by religious persons, when they prayed for God's blessing on any one; used by our Saviour, who, when *children*

* Isa. xi. 2. † Phil. ii. 5. ‡ Psal. cxi. 10.

children were brought to him, that he ſhould put his hands on them, and pray, and bleſs them, was much diſpleaſed * with thoſe who forbad it; uſed by the apoſtles, after converts were baptized, as the text plainly ſhews; reckoned in the epiſtle to the Hebrews among the foundations of the Chriſtian profeſſion †; conſtantly practiſed, and highly eſteemed in the Church from that time to this; and ſo far from being a popiſh ceremony, that the papiſts adminiſter Confirmation by other ceremonies of their own deviſing, and have laid aſide this primitive one; which therefore our church very prudently reſtored. And the cuſtom of it is approved, as apoſtolical, both by Luther and Calvin, and ſeveral of their followers, though they raſhly aboliſhed it, as having been abuſed ‡. But I am credibly informed, that at Geneva it hath lately been reſtored.

The laying on of the hand naturally expreſſes good will and good wiſhes in the perſon who doth it; and in the preſent caſe is further intended, as you will find in one of the following prayers, to *certify thoſe*, to whom it is done, *of God's favour and gracious goodneſs towards them:* of which goodneſs they will certainly feel the effects, provided, which muſt always be underſtood, that they preſerve their title to his care by a proper care of themſelves. This, it muſt be owned, is a truth: and we may as innocently ſignify it by this ſign as by any other, or as by any words to the ſame purpoſe. Further efficacy we do not aſcribe to it: nor would have you look on Biſhops, as having or claiming a power in any caſe, to confer bleſſings arbitrarily on whom they pleaſe; but only as petitioning God for that bleſſing from above which he alone can give; yet, we juſtly hope, will give the rather for the prayers of thoſe whom he hath placed over his people, unleſs your own unworthineſs prove an impediment. Not that you are to expect, on the performance of this good office, any ſudden and ſenſible change in your hearts, giving you, all at once, a remarkable ſtrength or comfort in piety, which you never felt before. But you may reaſonably promiſe yourſelves, from going through it with a proper diſpoſition, greater meaſures, when real occaſion requires them, of ſuch Divine aſſiſtance as will

* Matth. xix. 13,—15. Mark x. 13,—16. † Heb. vi. 1.

‡ See Camfield's two diſcourſes on Epiſcopal Confirmation, 8vo, 1682. page 23,—36.

will be needful for your support and orderly growth in every virtue of a Christian life.

And now, the Imposition of hands being finished, the Bishop and Congregation mutually recommend each other to God, and return to such joint and public devotions as are suitable to the solemnity. The first of these is the Lord's Prayer: a form seasonable always, but peculiarly now; as every petition in it will shew to every one who considers it. In the next place, more especial supplications are poured forth, for the persons particularly concerned, to him who alone can enable them *both to will and to do* what is *good*; that, as the hand of his minister hath been laid upon them, so *his fatherly hand may ever be over them, and lead them in* the only way; *the knowledge and obedience of his word*, to *everlasting life*. After this, a more general prayer is offered up for them and the rest of the congregation together, that God would *vouchsafe*, unworthy as we all are, so *to direct and govern both our hearts and bodies*, our inclinations and actions, (for neither will suffice without the other) *in the ways of his laws, and in the works of his commandments*, that, *through his most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul*: having the former, in his good time, raised up from the dead, and the latter made happy, in conjunction with it, to all eternity.

These requests being thus made, it only remains, that all be dismissed with a solemn blessing: which will certainly abide with you, unless, by wilful sin or gross negligence, you drive it away. And in that case, you must not hope, that your baptism, or your confirmation, or the prayers of the bishop, or the church, or the whole world, will do you any service. On the contrary, every thing which you might have been the better for, if you had made a good use of it, you will be the worse for, if you make a bad one. You do well to renew the covenant of your baptism in confirmation: but, if you break it, you forfeit the benefit of it. You do well to repeat your vows in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper: it is what all Christians are commanded to do by their dying Saviour, *for the strengthening and refreshing of their souls*: it is what I beg all, who are confirmed, will remember, and their friends and ministers remind them of; the sooner they are prepared for it, the happier; and by stopping short, the benefit of what preceded

preceded will be loſt. But if you are admitted to this privilege alſo, and live wickedly, you do but *eat and drink your own condemnation*. So that all depends on a thoroughly honeſt care of your hearts and behaviour in all reſpects.

Not that, with our beſt care, we can avoid ſmaller faults. And if we intreat pardon for them in our daily prayers, and faithfully ſtrive againſt them, they will not be imputed to us. But groſs and habitual ſins we may avoid, through God's help; and if we fall into *them*, we fall from our title to ſalvation at the ſame time. Yet even then our caſe is not deſperate; and let us not make it ſo, by thinking it is; for, thro' the grace of the goſpel, we may ſtill repent and amend, and then be forgiven. But I beg you to obſerve, that, as continued health is vaſtly preferable to the happieſt recovery from ſickneſs; ſo is innocence to the trueſt repentance. If we ſuffer ourſelves to tranſgreſs our duty; God knows whether we ſhall have time to repent; God knows whether we ſhall have a heart to do it. At beſt we ſhall have loſt, and more than loſt, the whole time that we have been going back; whereas we have all need to preſs forwards, as faſt as we can. Therefore let the innocent of wilful ſin preſerve themſelves ſo with the greateſt circumſpection; and the faulty return from their errors without delay. Let the young enter upon the way of righteouſneſs with hearty reſolution; and thoſe of riper age perſevere in it to the end. In a word, let us all, of every age, ſeriouſly conſider, and faithfully practiſe, the obligations of religion. For *the vows of God are* ſtill *upon us* *, how long ſoever it be ſince they were firſt made, either by us, or for us; and it is in vain to forget what he will aſſuredly remember, or hope to be ſafe in neglecting what he expects us to do. But let us uſe proper diligence; and he will infallibly give us proper aſſiſtance, and *confirm us* all *unto the end, that we may be blameleſs in the day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* †.

Now unto him, who is able to keep us from falling, and to preſent us faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wiſe God, our Saviour, be glory and majeſty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen ‡.

* Pſal. lvi. 12. † 1 Cor. i. 8. ‡ Jude 24, 25.

EIGHT

CHARGES

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE DIOCESES OF

OXFORD AND CANTERBURY.

THE

CHARGE

OF

THOMAS Lord Bishop of OXFORD

TO THE

CLERGY of his DIOCESE,

IN

HIS PRIMARY VISITATION 1738.

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.

Reverend Brethren,

I AM very ſenſible, that you cannot meet together on this occaſion, without making deep reflections on the loſs, which you have ſuffered, for the public good, by the removal of a Paſtor, whom the experience of ſo many years hath taught you to eſteem and honour ſo highly. It is your farther unhappineſs, that he is ſucceeded by a perſon, very unequal to the care of this conſpicuous and important Dioceſe. But your humanity and your piety will, I doubt not, incline you, both to accept and to aſſiſt the endeavours of one, who can aſſure you, with very great truth, that he is earneſtly deſirous of being as uſeful to you all as he can; and ſeriouſly concerned for the intereſts of religion, and of this church. Would to God there were leſs need of expreſſing a concern for them, than there is at preſent!

Men

Men have always complained of their own times; and always with too much reason. But though it is natural to think those evils the greatest, which we feel ourselves; and therefore mistakes are easily made, in comparing one age with another; yet in this we cannot be mistaken, that an open and professed disregard to religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age; that this evil is grown to a great height in the metropolis of the nation; is daily spreading through every part of it; and, bad in itself as any can be, must of necessity bring in most others after it. Indeed it hath already brought in such dissoluteness, and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world, and such profligate intemperance, and fearlessness of committing crimes, in the lower, as must, if this torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal. And God knows, far from stopping, it receives, through the ill designs of some persons, and the inconsiderateness of others, a continual increase. Christianity is now ridiculed and railed at, with very little reserve; and the teachers of it, without any at all. Indeed, with respect to us, the rule, which most of our adversaries appear to have set themselves, is, to be, at all adventures, as bitter as they can; and they follow it, not only beyond truth, but beyond probability; asserting the very worst things of us without foundation, and exaggerating every thing without mercy; imputing the faults, and sometimes imaginary faults, of particular persons to the whole order; and then declaiming against us all promiscuously with such wild vehemence, as, in any case but ours, they themselves would think, in the highest degree, unjust and cruel. Or if sometimes a few exceptions are made, they are usually made only to divide us amongst ourselves; to deceive one part of us, and throw a greater odium upon the other. Still, were these invectives only to affect us personally, dear as our reputations are and ought to be to us, the mischief would be small, in comparison of what it is. But the consequence hath been, as it naturally must, that disregard to us hath greatly increased the disregard to public worship and instruction; that many are grown prejudiced against religion; many more, indifferent about it and unacquainted with it. And the emissaries of the Romish church, taking the members of ours at this unhappy disavantage, have begun to reap great harvests in the field, which

hath

hath thus been prepared for them by the labours of thoſe, who would be thought their moſt irreconcileable enemies.

Yet, however melancholy the view before us appears, we have no reaſon to be diſcouraged; for let us take care of our duty, and God will take care of the event. But we have great reaſon to think ſeriouſly, what our duty on this occaſion is; and ſtir up each other to the performance of it; that where-ever the guilt of theſe things may fall, it may not fall on our heads. *For it muſt needs be, that offences come: but woe to that man, by whom the offence cometh* *. Our grief for the decay of religion might be attended with much comfort in regard to ourſelves, could we but truly ſay, that no faults or infirmities of ours had ever given advantages againſt it. But though, God be thanked, we are far from being what our adverſaries would repreſent us; whoſe reproaches perhaps were never leſs deſerved, than now when they are the moſt violent; yet, it muſt be owned, we are not by any means, even the beſt of us, what we ought to be. And the preſent ſtate of things calls loudly upon us, to correct our miſtakes, to ſupply our deficiencies, and do all we are able for the honour of God, and the happineſs of mankind.

If we can be unconcerned now, we have neither piety nor common prudence in us. And if we are concerned in earneſt, we ſhall be very deſirous, both to avoid all wrong methods of ſhowing it, and to make uſe of all right ones.

Complaining of our ſuperiors for thoſe evils, which perhaps they cannot prevent; or complaining of them with diſreſpect, for what we may apprehend they could prevent, would both be undutiful and imprudent conduct: would give our adverſaries joy, and do our cauſe harm. Indeed, to beg earneſtly of God, that he would direct the hearts of thoſe, who preſide over the public welfare; and humbly to repreſent to them, on all fit occaſions, the declining ſtate of religion, the importance and the means of preſerving it; theſe things are unqueſtionable duties. But then we muſt always approve ourſelves, at the ſame time, conſcientiouſly loyal both in word and deed; reaſonable in our expectations; ſincerely grateful for the protection, which we are aſſured of enjoying; and duly ſenſible, that every thing of value to us, in this world, depends

* Matth. xviii. 7.

depends on the ſupport of that government, under which we now live. We cannot be good men, if we are bad ſubjects: and we are not wiſe men, if we permit ourſelves to be ſuſpected of it.

A ſecond proper caution is, That to ſpeak unfavourably of liberty, religious or civil, inſtead of carefully diſtinguiſhing both from the many abuſes of them, which we daily ſee; or to encourage any other reſtraints on either, than public utility makes evidently needful; can only ſerve to increaſe that jealouſy, which, being in former ages grounded too well, hath been moſt induſtriouſly heightened, when there never was ſo little pretence of ground for it; that the claims of the clergy are hurtful to the rights of mankind. It concerns us greatly to remove ſo dangerous a prejudice againſt us, as this: not by renouncing thoſe powers, which the goſpel hath given us; for we are bound to aſſert them; but by convincing the world, that they are perfectly innocent; and avoiding all appearance of aſſuming what we have no right to: by ſhowing our abhorrence of tyranny, eſpecially over the conſciences of men; and ſatisfying them fully, if poſſible, that *we preach not ourſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus, the Lord; and ourſelves, their ſervants, for his ſake**. Then, with reſpect to the privileges, that we derive from human authority; as, on the one hand, receding from any of them without cauſe is only inviting freſh encroachments, and giving needleſs advantages to ſuch as will be ſure to loſe none; ſo, on the other, ſtraining them too far is the likelieſt way to deſtroy them all at once; and both our uſefulneſs and our ſecurity depend very much, on our appearing plainly to deſire nothing inconſiſtent with the common good; to have the trueſt concern for all reaſonable liberty, and to be zealous only againſt licentiouſneſs and confuſion.

Thirdly, If we ſhould be tempted to oppoſe profaneneſs, by encouraging the oppoſite extreme of ſuperſtition; this alſo would be unjuſtifiable in itſelf; would have bad effects upon as many as we might miſlead; and give great opportunities to all that ſhould ſee them miſled, either of accuſing religion, or expoſing us, as corrupters of religion. Not that we are to give up inconſiderately, whatever ſome perſons are pleaſed to charge

* 2 Cor. iv. 5.

charge with ſuperſtition; for there would be no end of conceſſions at that rate; but only to avoid encouraging any thing, that can be juſtly charged with it; and then we ſhall ſtand upon ſure ground. For nothing can be more unjuſt, than thoſe imputations of it, which our adverſaries are ſo fond of throwing, ſome upon Chriſtianity itſelf, others on the doctrine and worſhip of that church, of which, through God's merciful providence, we have the happineſs to be members.

Another very pernicious error would be, if we ſhould think to ſerve our cauſe by intemperate warmth in it. Chriſtian zeal indeed is a duty, that never was more needful, and never leſs ſhown. But paſſion will do no good. If expreſſed againſt thoſe who are indifferent about religion, it will turn them into enemies: if againſt the enemies of religion, it will make them yet more vehement enemies. Beſides, the extravagant things, that men ſay and attempt againſt us and our profeſſion, are not always deſigned injuries; but frequently the effects of miſrepreſentations, and prejudices, that have imperceptibly taken hold on perſons, who otherwiſe mean tolerably well. Now, mildneſs to ſuch as theſe is but juſtice: and to all others, it is prudence. Railing is the province which our adverſaries have choſen: and let us leave it to them. For whatever ſucceſs they may meet with that way, as indeed they excel in it, we ſhall meet with none: but only make the ſpirit of Chriſtianity be miſunderſtood and ill ſpoken of, by our own want of it. Therefore, how injuriouſly ſoever we may be treated, let us return neither injurious nor harſh treatment for it: nor endeavour to mark out thoſe perſons for objects of popular hatred, who are ever ſo unwearied in labouring to make us ſo. Yet, at the ſame time, we muſt never court irreligious men by wrong compliances; never contribute to increaſe their power of doing harm; never deſert our duty, either for fear of them, or favour from them. But then let us defend both religion and ourſelves, with that fairneſs and decency, as well as courage, which becomes our function: acknowledge ingenuouſly whatever can be alledged againſt us with truth, only claiming equitable allowances; and where charges are untrue, yet uſe mild expoſtulations, not reproaches; and try to ſhame our oppoſers by the reaſonableneſs of what we ſay, rather than exaſperate them by the vehemence

of it. They indeed have little cauſe either to complain or to triumph, if, under ſuch groſs provocations as they give, our temper ſometimes fails: but we have great cauſe to do our utmoſt, that it fail not.

And if undue ſeverity of ſpeech muſt be forborn towards profeſſed enemies; much more to thoſe, who may, for aught we know, deſign themſelves for friends. Indeed, when it is evident, that men only put on a pretence of wiſhing well to Chriſtianity, or the teachers of it; and, whilſt they affect to charge us with uncharitableneſs for queſtioning their ſincerity, would deſpiſe us for believing them: there we muſt be allowed to ſee what plainly appears: and to ſpeak of them, both as adverſaries, and unfair ones. Or when doctrines, whatever the intention of propagating them be, are inconſiſtent either with the whole or any part of our religion; it is no uncharitableneſs, but our duty, to lay open the falſehood and the danger of them. Nay, ſuppoſing only the legal eſtabliſhment of religion, or ſome branch of it, be attacked; yet the attempt may both be injurious enough to us, and detrimental enough to the public, to deſerve a vigorous oppoſition. But to ſhew paſſion and bitterneſs in any of theſe caſes; to take pleaſure in making mens miſtakes or deſigns thought worſe than they are; to judge harſhly of them with reſpect to another world, or expoſe them to ill uſage in this; to refuſe them due allowances for human infirmity, or be more backward to own their merits, than to ſee their faults: ſuch behaviour, inſtead of promoting truth, will prejudiſe the world againſt it; will give unbelievers dreadful advantages, and for ever prevent that union amongſt Chriſtians, which would procure us, above all things, the eſteem of men, and the bleſſing of God.

From theſe improper methods of ſupporting religion, let us now proceed to the proper ones. And they will naturally fall under the general heads, of our inſtructions and our lives.

Giving inſtruction requires knowledge. And therefore, as a competent degree of it is juſtly expected of perſons, before they enter into holy orders: ſo, when they enter, the care of making a continual progreſs in it is ſolemnly promiſed by them, and covenanted for with them. What may be a very good beginning, is by no means a ſufficient ſtock to go on with;

with; and even that will leſſen, if no pains be taken to increaſe it. Continued application then is a duty of importance. Perſons of lower abilities and attainments are in danger, without it, of being uſeleſs and deſpiſed: And they, who ſet out with greater advantages, are bound to endeavour at doing, in proportion, greater ſervices to the Church of God. Without exception therefore, all who are engaged in ſo ſerious an employment as ours, if they have any regard either to their duty or their character, muſt take care not to be more remarkable for their diverſions than their ſtudies; nor indolently to trifle their time away, inſtead of employing it to good purpoſes. And though moſt parts of learning will be uſeful to us, and all parts ornamental; yet we muſt be ſure to remember, what we have been ſolemnly admoniſhed of, that no attention to any thing elſe, ought ever to draw us away from the purſuit of ſuch knowledge, as is properly theological. For to excel in other things, and be deficient in that, cannot but caſt a grievous reflection; either on us, for not ſtudying what we profeſs; or on our profeſſion, as having little in it worth ſtudying. Our principal buſineſs therefore muſt be, to obtain a thorough acquaintance with the Chriſtian faith: firſt the grounds, then the doctrines of it. And the previous qualifications for attempting this are, a due knowledge of the rules of right reaſoning, and of the moral and religious truths which nature teaches; of the ſtate of the world in its earlier ages, and in that when Chriſtianity firſt appeared. Theſe preparations being made, the great thing requiſite in the next place is a diligent ſearch into holy ſcripture. For there it is, that both the authentic ſyſtem of our belief, and the chief evidence for it, are exhibited to our view. Scripture therefore, above all things, the infidel endeavours to ridicule; the miſtaken Chriſtian, to wreſt in ſupport of his errors: and if we deſire, either to confute them, or to ſatisfy ourſelves; our only way muſt be, to underſtand it well. For which end it is quite neceſſary, that we make the original language, at leaſt of the New Teſtament, familiar to us: and were that of the old more commonly ſtudied, the advantages would be very conſiderable.

In order to ſee clearly, on what grounds our belief ſtands; together with the ſacred volumes themſelves, the writings of

ſuch learned perſons, as have proved their authority, and vindicated their accounts of things, muſt be carefully read; and attentively compared with thoſe objections againſt them, which have been revived of late, dreſſed up with ſo much art, and ſpread abroad with ſo much diligence. For in our preſent circumſtances we are always liable to be attacked: and conſider, what an unhappy triumph it would afford, ſhould we be found unprovided of a rational defence. It is very true, the general evidence, which we have for our faith, is abundantly ſufficient of itſelf, to overbalance many difficulties concerning it, and ever ſo many cavils againſt it. But yet our being unqualified to give more particular anſwers, where they can be given; as indeed there are few caſes, where they cannot; may often prove a great reproach to us, and a great ſtumbling-block to others.

Next to the grounds of religion, the doctrines of it, eſpecially the more important and diſputed ones, ought to be ſtudied, with ſuch diligence and impartiality, as may beſt diſcover to us the nature of every opinion, and the force of every argument: that ſo we may neither load Chriſtianity with what doth not belong to it; nor betray, inſtead of defending it, by giving up what doth; but faithfully *keep that which is committed to our truſt* *, both entire and unmixed. To ſecure this great end, we muſt ever adhere ſtrictly to the word of God, fairly interpreted by the help of all ſuch means as providence hath given; and carefully avoid, on the one hand, fondneſs of novelty; and on the other, over-great reverence of antiquity, eſpecially ſuch as comes ſhort of the earlieſt. But againſt the former of theſe, it is peculiarly needful to caution the riſing generation; whom the raſhneſs of youth, and the petulant ſpirit of the preſent age, too often hurries into a ſtrange vehemence for any imagination, which they have happened to take up; and prompts them to fly out againſt eſtabliſhed doctrines, without having always the patience even to underſtand them. Such therefore ſhould be exhorted to learn a proper degree, both of ſilence and ſuſpence, till cooler thoughts, and farther inquiry, make them fitter judges of things. But beſides thoſe controverſies, to which this caution chiefly relates; that between the papiſts and us deſerves

* 1 Tim. vi. 20.

at preſent to be well ſtudied, by ſuch of you as live in the neighbourhood of any. For ſeldom have they ſhewn more zeal or more artifice, than of late, in their attempts of making proſelytes. And therefore it is of great conſequence, that we provide ourſelves againſt them, with a ſufficient knowledge of their real doctrines, their moſt ſpecious pleas, and the proper anſwers to them. Another ſubject, with which we are concerned to be well acquainted is, what relates to the government and worſhip, diſcipline and eſtabliſhment of our own church. Different parts of our eccleſiaſtical conſtitution are frequently cenſured, by different ſorts of perſons, with very different views: though indeed the moſt oppoſite of them have appeared, for ſome time, unaccountably diſpoſed to unite againſt us; and believers to join with infidels in uſing their Chriſtian brethren ill. It may therefore be of great uſe, to inform ourſelves diligently concerning every thing of this nature, which is ſpoken of to our prejudice; and be always ready to ſhow the genuine ſtate of the caſe, with mildneſs and fairneſs. But no controverſies, however needful, muſt be ſuffered to divert our attention from what is of all things the moſt needful, the ſtudy of practical religion, and of the common duties of life. Theſe are the things which mankind are moſt apt to fail in, and moſt concerned not to fail in; and therefore ſpending much time upon them, obtaining a thorough inſight into them, and having a deep ſenſe of them, is the very foundation of doing good, both to others and to our own ſouls.

A competent proviſion of knowledge being ſuppoſed, the next thing is communicating it to thoſe who are under our care, in ſuch manner as their circumſtances require.

The proofs of religion, both natural and revealed, all men ſhould be taught, and eſpecially at preſent, in the moſt intelligible and convincing manner. As for the objections againſt either: ſuch as it may be ſuppoſed they have thought or heard of, ſhould be diſtinctly anſwered; but the reſt obviated only, as occaſion offers. For to enter into them farther, would be miſpending time. Next to the truth of religion, they ſhould have its importance laid before them. The neceſſity of a moral life moſt men will own in general terms: only what they are pleaſed to call ſo, is often a very immoral one, both with reſpect to their fellow-creatures, and the government of themſelves,

ſelves. But regard to piety is ſtrangely loſt, even amongſt perſons that are otherwiſe tolerably ſerious. Many have laid aſide all appearances of it: and others, who would ſeem to keep them up, do it with evident marks of indifference and contempt. It ſhould therefore be induſtriouſly ſhown, and inculcated, that an inward ſenſe of love and duty to God, founded on juſt conceptions of him, and expreſſing itſelf in frequent acts of worſhip, conſtant obedience and reſignation to him, is in truth *the firſt and great commandment* *, the principal and moſt important of moral obligations. But then, beſides thoſe inſtances of piety, which reaſon requires of us, there are others, founded on relations equally real, and conſequently deſerving equal regard, enjoined by revelation. The utmoſt care therefore ought to be uſed, conſidering the preſent diſpoſition of the world, to convince men of what moment the doctrines and duties of the goſpel are. To make reaſon ſufficient for nothing in religion, is to overturn every thing. But to inſiſt on its inſufficiency for many moſt valuable purpoſes, which revelation is fully ſufficient for, and on the neceſſity of obſerving whatever God hath thought fit to command, this is doing but common juſtice, though a very ſeaſonable piece of juſtice, to the doctrine of our bleſſed Saviour, and the authority of our Maker.

When once men are brought to underſtand the value of Chriſtianity, the next thing is, to give them a proportionable ſolicitude for them: to make them obſerve, how viſibly the belief and practice of it decay, and how dreadful the conſequences muſt be and are; to ſhow them, that religion is not the concern of the clergy merely, but the common concern of all men; the great thing, on which public and private happineſs depends in this life, as well as eternal felicity in the next; that therefore, if they have any value for theſe important intereſts, they muſt take the neceſſary means of ſecuring them; their children, their ſervants and dependants muſt be diligently watched over and inſtructed; private devotion muſt be practiſed, family-worſhip revived, and the ſervice of God in the church regularly and ſeriouſly attended upon. For laying aſide theſe things hath almoſt baniſhed religion from amongſt us; and nothing, but reſtoring them, can bring it back.

Piety

* Matth. xxii. 38.

Piety is indeed ſeated in the heart; but to give it no vent in outward expreſſion, is to ſtifle and extinguiſh it. Neglecting the public exerciſe of religion, is deſtroying the public regard to it; and teaching men to deſpiſe their own form of religion, is enough very often to make them deſpiſe it under any form.

Great pains have been taken by our adverſaries to give the world an ill opinion of religious inſtruction; and we muſt take equal pains to give them a good one of it; by repreſenting to them, both the natural influence it hath, and the divine authority that enjoins it. But after all, the effectual conviction will be that of experience. And therefore the chief point is, to endeavour that men may feel the benefit of our teaching; feel at leaſt, that it is their own fault, not ours, if they do not become the wiſer, the better and happier for it. To this end, we muſt all dwell often and ſtrongly on the great duties, and great failures of duty, in common life: firſt explaining the obligations of religion ſo as that they may be practiſed: then inſiſting on it, that they muſt: entering into the particulars of each with ſuch plainneſs, that every one may clearly ſee his own faults laid before him; yet with ſuch prudence, that no one may ſo much as imagine himſelf perſonally pointed at: and taking the ſtricteſt care, that no part of what we ſay may ſeem in the leaſt to proceed from our own paſſions, or our own intereſts; but all appear evidently to flow from a true concern for the good of thoſe that hear us. Diligent conſideration, what our ſubject and our ſeveral characters will bear us out in, muſt direct us, when to give our judgment with diffidence, when to lay ſtreſs upon it: in what caſes to *exhort with all long-ſuffering* *; in what, to *rebuke with all authority* †. But whichſoever we do, neither our language ſhould be florid, nor our manner theatrical: for theſe things only raiſe an uſeleſs admiration in weak perſons, and produce great contempt in judicious ones. Nor yet on the other hand, ſhould our expreſſions be mean, or our behaviour lifeleſs; but both muſt be ſuitable to the employment we are upon; both be ſuch as come naturally from the heart of the ſpeaker, and therefore will naturally move that of the hearer.

To this our public teaching it will be a great help, and indeed

* 2 Tim. iv. 2. † Tit. ii. 15.

deed a valuable part of it, if we perform the several offices of our excellent Liturgy devoutly and properly; neither with an irreverent precipitation, nor a tedious slowness; neither in a flat and languid manner, nor yet with an affected liveliness, or a vehemence ill-placed or over-done; but so as may best express the sense and the importance of what we read; and, by showing our own attention to it, engage that of all around us.

Besides our general instructions, it is very needful, that we give the youth under our care, in particular, an early knowledge and love of religion, that may abide with them; and stand the trials, to which their riper years will of course be exposed. I hope you are all diligent in that most useful work of catechising; and have done your utmost to prepare for confirmation, those whom you present to me. And I earnestly recommend it to you, that the good impressions, which may well be supposed to have been made upon their minds at this season, be not suffered to wear off again; but be improved into settled habits of religion and virtue, by still farther exhortations, and leading them, as soon as possible, to the holy communion. But, though all the youth deserve our peculiar attention; yet if any of them be educated in charity-schools under our inspection, for these we should think ourselves still more nearly concerned, than for the rest; and, by first taking care, to have them taught whatever is proper, and nothing else, then making known the good management they are under, put an end to those accusations, of their learning idleness and pride, superstition and disloyalty; which may have been, sometimes one of them, sometimes another, in some degree deserved; but have been carried with a wicked industry most shamefully beyond truth, and lessened the credit of this excellent institution, even with many good persons, to the great detriment of Christianity.

Another very useful method of spreading the knowledge of religion, and teaching men a serious regard to it, is by distributing, or procuring to be distributed, such pious books, especially to the poorer sort, as are best suited to their capacities and circumstances. For there is great variety of them to be had; and at so very low prices, that much good may be done this way to considerable numbers at once, in a most acceptable manner, for a trifling expence.

But

But nothing will contribute more to make our public inſtructions effectual, than private converſation, directed with prudence to the ſame end. The better we are known to perſons, the greater influence we may hope to have upon them; and the better we know them, the more diſtinctly we ſhall ſee how to make uſe of that influence to good purpoſes. By repreſenting proper truths, at fit times, with a modeſt freedom, we may very much abate the prejudices of men, who have any fairneſs remaining, both againſt religion and ourſelves: at leaſt we may prevail on them, for the ſake of public order, and example, to keep within the bounds of decency; and ſo prevent their doing harm, if we cannot make them good. Perſons that err in particular points of doctrine, friendly diſcourſe may ſhew us what led them into their miſtakes, and enable us to lead them out again. Such as diſſent from our church-government and worſhip, talking amicably with them, and behaving in the ſame manner towards them, if it doth not immediately bring them over, may however bring them nearer to us, both in judgment and affection. Such as are faulty in their moral conduct, ſerious and affectionate remonſtrances, given in private and kept private, and joined with a tenderneſs to their characters in public, may often do a great deal towards reforming them; and, ſooner or later, the ſeed thus ſown may ſpring up in their hearts, and produce happy fruits. We ſhould not indeed preſs upon perſons, when there is no other proſpect than that of provoking them: but we ought to watch all opportunities, whilſt there is any hope left; and not only make it our endeavour to convert the miſtaken and vicious, but ſtir up the negligent to ſerious thought, and the good themſelves to more eminent goodneſs. Eſpecially ſuch perſons of rank and influence, as we find well diſpoſed, theſe we muſt earneſtly excite to appear and give countenance to the cauſe of religion, ever remembering that awful declaration of our bleſſed Lord: *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels**. We muſt convince them of the urgent neceſſity there is, for interpoſing in behalf of piety and

* Mark viii. 38.

virtue; and ſuggeſt to them the means for engaging with ſucceſs in this excellent employment. Yet muſt we never ſpend ſo much of our attention on the higher part of the world, as to give the leaſt ſuſpicion of neglecting the lower; whoſe number is ſo much larger, whoſe diſpoſitions are uſually ſo much more favourable to religion, and whoſe eternal happineſs is of equal importance to them, and ought to be of equal concern to us; but we muſt prove we are in earneſt in our work, by making it our care, as it was our Maſter's, that *the poor have the goſpel preached to them* *. And one opportunity of preaching it with ſingular advantage, both to the poor and the rich, is when ſickneſs brings near to them the view of another life. At ſome times indeed the ſick may be incapable of attending to exhortations: at others they may be endangered by them: and at all times great prudence is requiſite, to avoid the extremes, of terrifying or indulging them too much. But, provided due caution be uſed in theſe reſpects; laying before them what they ought to be, and reminding them to conſult their own conſciences what they have been, is a moſt likely method of exciting in them ſuch affections and reſolutions at that ſeaſon of recollection and ſerioufneſs, as, through the bleſſing of Heaven, may produce the happieſt effects.

To theſe excellent offices, therefore, we muſt all of us chearfully apply ourſelves, each in ſuch degree as his ſtation requires. If they do require pains, if they do take up time, if they are inconſiſtent with agreeable amuſements, and even interrupt uſeful ſtudies of other kinds; yet this is the buſineſs which we have ſolemnly choſen, and the vows of God are upon us; it is the moſt important and moſt honourable, it ought to be the moſt delightful too of all employments: and therefore we have every reaſon not to ſeek the means of evading our duty, but of fulfilling it; and each to *take the overſight of the flock of God*, committed to him, *not by conſtraint, but willingly* †. For if we only juſt do what we can be puniſhed by our ſuperiors for neglecting, we muſt neither expect ſucceſs nor reward.

But then to ſecure either, the chief thing requiſite is ſtill behind; that our own tempers and lives be ſuch, as we ſay thoſe

* Matth. xi. 5. † 1 Pet. v. 2.

thoſe of other perſons ſhould. For if we, who teach religion, live, or ſuffer our families to live, with little or no ſenſe of religion, what can we poſſibly expect, but that men will improve ſo palpable an advantage againſt us to the utmoſt; will argue, that we believe not our own doctrine, and therefore it deſerves no belief; or, we practiſe not our own precepts, and therefore they cannot be practiſed? Thus we ſhall increaſe that infidelity and wickedneſs, which our buſineſs is to oppoſe. Too much of it will be really owing to us; and the whole will be laid upon us. The enemies of religion will have the beſt pretence in the world to ruin us; and the friends of it will grow unconcerned for us, and ready to give us up to them. But, were theſe conſequences not to follow, ſtill very bad ones muſt follow. Men, irreligious or vicious themſelves, cannot be hearty in oppoſing irreligion and vice; they cannot do it with boldneſs, if they were hearty; and could they be ever ſo bold, it muſt ſit much too ill upon them, to have any good effect. Wrong-minded perſons will be furniſhed with the moſt plauſible excuſe imaginable for diſregarding them intirely; and the righteſt-minded perſons that ever were, cannot, if they would, regard them as they ought. This will be the caſe, even with reſpect to their public teaching: and as for private admonitions, they will ſeldom have the face to venture upon them, and never ſucceed in them; whereas every word, that comes from an exemplary man, hath great weight; and his bare example is moſt valuable inſtruction of itſelf. But, were a bad life not to hinder at all the ſucceſs of our miniſtry; yet we muſt remember, it will abſolutely hinder the ſalvation of our ſouls: and ſubject us to that *ſorer puniſhment, of which he may well be thought worthy, who, teaching others, teacheth not himſelf, but, through breaking the law, diſhonoureth God* *.

Nor is it ſufficient by any means for us to be guilty of no vice. This is ſmall praiſe, for one of our order. We are bound to be patterns of the moſt diligent practice of virtue, and the ſtricteſt regard to religion: and we ſhall never make others zealous for what we ourſelves appear indifferent about. It is very true, that, peculiarly in our caſe, the generality of the world both expect and find fault, quite beyond reaſon;

* Heb. x. 29. Rom. ii. 21, 23.

and doubtleſs they are much to blame in doing ſo. But then ſurely we are no leſs to blame, if, when we know the ſeverity, with which our conduct will be examined, we do not watch over it with equal ſeverity ourſelves; and take the only way to be looked on as good men, that is, being ſuch undeniably. And whoever hath a due ſenſe of this obligation, will conſcientiouſly *abſtain*, not only *from all evil*, but *all appearance* of it too *. Such a one, for inſtance, far from offending againſt temperance, will be noted for it; and think the imputation of being *mighty to drink wine* † almoſt as infamous as that of being overcome by it. Far from being remarkable for luxury and delicacy in his manner of living or appearing, he will be ſure to preſerve himſelf, on all occaſions, at leaſt as remote from indulgence as he is from auſterity. And though he will never diſguſt the perſons, with whom he converſes, by a gravity affected or ill-timed: yet he will be equally careful, never to expoſe himſelf, by a lightneſs of carriage unbecoming his function; nor let any thing be a part of his character, much leſs a diſtinguiſhing part, that can only tend to lower it. For we can never be uſeful, if we are deſpiſed; and we ſhall be deſpiſed, if we will give opportunities for it. Even they, who ſeem well pleaſed with us, will think meanly of us inwardly; and perhaps of the whole order, for our ſakes.

Yet, at the ſame time, we may be greatly miſtaken, if we aim to avoid contempt by haughtineſs: which will only add hatred to it. Our rule therefore muſt be, to expreſs, in every thing, condeſcenſion to the lower part of the world, without being improperly familiar; and reſpect to the upper, without being ſervile: recommending ourſelves at once to the love and eſteem of both, by a mild kind of dignity and ingenuous ſimplicity, kept up through our whole behaviour. Mildneſs of temper is the duty of every man: but eſpecially required of us ‡; and abſolutely neceſſary, both to our preſerving regard, and doing ſervice in the world. Therefore, whatever provocations we meet with from thoſe, amongſt whom we live, as indeed we often meet with great ones, it neither belongs to our character, nor will be for our intereſt, to take offence

* 1 Theſſ. v. 22. † Iſa. v. 22. ‡ Mat. x. 16. 1 Tim. iii. 3. 2 Tim. ii. 24.

offence and expreſs reſentment; but by prudence and patience to *overcome evil with good**. For we ſhall often do it this way, and never any other. Inſtead of being engaged in enmities of our own, it ſhould be our endeavour to compoſe the differences of other perſons; not by intermeddling in their affairs, when we are not called to it; but by laying hold on every fit opportunity given us, for diſpoſing them to a mutual good opinion, where there is room for it; or at leaſt, to mutual good-will. Too many occaſions indeed for friendly interpoſition, our unhappy party-diſputes furniſh us with, had we no other. Entering into theſe with vehemence, and that injuſtice which never fails to accompany vehemence, is what all men ſhould avoid; but we, who muſt caution them againſt it, ſhould avoid it with uncommon care; ſhould religiouſly pay that reſpect to every one, which is their due, eſpecially to our ſuperiors; think well of mens actions and deſigns, unleſs we have evident cauſe to think otherwiſe; judge with modeſty, where perhaps we are not qualified to judge; and whatever our opinion be, preſerve our behaviour inoffenſive; give the leaſt provocation, that may be, to bad men of any ſide; and act in ſuch manner, as may gain us, if poſſible, the united eſteem of good men of all ſides. For theirs is the friendſhip of which we ought to be ambitious. Familiarities with profane and vicious perſons, beyond what neceſſary civility, or a real proſpect of reforming them requires, will, whatever we may promiſe ourſelves from their favour or intereſt, always diſcredit and weaken us in general; and much oftner prove hurtful, than advantageous, to any of us in particular. But to cultivate the good opinion of the wiſe and virtuous, to recommend ourſelves to their protection, and, whatever elſe they may differ about, engage their common zeal in the common cauſe of religion; this will procure us both ſecurity and honour, and every way promote the great deſign of our profeſſion.

Another point, on which our character will not a little depend, is our being, in a reaſonable degree, diſintereſted. A very large proportion indeed of the clergy have too much cauſe to endeavour at bettering their circumſtances; and it is barbarous treatment, to accuſe them for it, inſtead of pity-

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* Rom. xii. 21.

ing them. But over-great ſolicitude and contrivance for advancing ourſelves will always make impreſſions to our prejudice, let our condition be ever ſo low: though deſervedly much ſtronger impreſſions, in proportion as it is higher. We ſhall be thought to have no attention, but that of which we diſcover too much: and the truth is, *we cannot ſerve two maſters**. Nor will it be ſufficient, that we avoid the charge of immoderately deſiring more; unleſs we avoid alſo that of ſelfiſhneſs, in the management of what we have already; a matter, in which it is very difficult, and yet very important, to give no offence. We are bound, both to thoſe who belong to us, and thoſe who ſhall come after us, to take a proper care of our legal dues; and preſerve them faithfully from the encroachments of ſuch, as tell us very truly, that we ought not to be worldly-minded; but forget, what is equally true, that they themſelves ought not to be ſo. But then the ſtrongeſt reaſons of all kinds oblige us, never to make unjuſt or litigious claims; never to do any thing, either hard and rigorous, or mean and ſordid: to ſhow, that we deſire always the moſt eaſy and amicable method of ending diſputes; and whatever method we may be forced to take, never to let any thing force us into the leaſt degree of unfairneſs, paſſion, or ill-will; but endavour, by all inſtances of friendly behaviour, to win, if poſſible, upon the perſon we have to do with; at leaſt to convince every body elſe, how very far we are from intending wrong to him, or any one.

And nothing will contribute more, to acquit us from the ſuſpicion of being ſelfiſh in our dealings with other perſons, than approving ourſelves charitable to the poor: a virtue which becomes us ſo extremely, and is ſo peculiarly expected from us, and will give us ſo valuable an influence; that we ſhould willingly ſtraiten ourſelves in almoſt any thing beſides, that to the full proportion of our abilities, we may abound in giving alms. And together with this, would we but, each in his ſtation, take the beſt care we can to ſee juſtice done them in that proviſion, which the law hath intended for them, it would generally prove a much more conſiderable benefaction, than all that we are able to beſtow on them of our own.

To

* Matth. vi. 24.

To the above-mentioned inſtances of right conduct we muſt always add, what will render them very engaging, the occaſional kind offices of good neighbourhood; with a decent hoſpitality alſo, if our circumſtances will permit it; and then, notwithſtanding the cenſures of thoſe, who complain that we are of little uſe, and endeavour to make us of none; we may ſurely well hope to do ſervice to God, and be eſteemed of men; eſpecially if, together with ſo exemplary a behaviour towards others, we are friendly and compaſſionate, candid and equitable amongſt ourſelves.'

Great injuſtice, I am ſatisfied, is done us on this head; and many groundleſs accuſations brought confidently againſt us, by perſons, who neither enquire into facts, nor conſider circumſtances. But there are few things, in which it concerns us more, to clear ourſelves where we are faulty. For ſo long as we are thought in the world, either inſolent to our inferior brethren in general, or void of generoſity and pity to ſuch of them as we employ; we muſt not expect to receive better treatment, than we are underſtood to give. And if we are believed to be chargeable, beyond other men, with mutual bitterneſs and vehemence, when any kind of controverſy riſes amongſt us; this too is a character, ſo very different from that which ought to be ours, that the utmoſt care ſhould be taken to guard againſt it. Not that we are obliged, either to ſpeak of or behave to men of bad lives, or bad principles, as if they were good ones, becauſe unhappily they belong to our order. Making no diſtinction would be on all accounts wrong; and making a proper diſtinction will be very uſeful. But then we ſhould never think worſe of our brethren, than evidence forces us; never publiſh our ill opinion, without ſufficient reaſon; nor exceed, when we do publiſh it, the bounds of moderation: we ſhould be ready to ſhow them all fitting kindneſs, even whilſt they continue blameable; and receive them back with the moſt charitable tenderneſs, when they return to their duty. For there is no manner of need, that we ſhould give either ſo much advantage or ſo much pleaſure to the adverſaries of religion, as to let them ſee thoſe, who ſhould be the joint-defenders of it, engaged in domeſtic wars: and bringing ſuch charges, and raiſing ſuch prejudices, one againſt another, that it is hard to ſay, whether believing or diſbelieving our mutual accuſations will make the world think worſe

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of us. Our bleſſed Lord therefore, after reminding his diſciples, that *they were the ſalt of the earth*; were deſigned, by the purity of their doctrine and example, to keep others from corruption; and after giving them that prophetic warning, which we ſhall find men zealous to fulfil, that *if the ſalt have loſt its ſavour, it ſhall be caſt out and trodden under foot* *; reſuming the ſame figure at another time, concludes his exhortation thus, *Have ſalt in yourſelves, and have peace one with another* †.

To theſe things, brethren, if we have any concern for the intereſts of religion, or our own, we muſt always induſtriouſly attend; but eſpecially in ſuch times, as by no means admit of negligence or miſmanagement. Yet vain will our beſt endeavours be, unleſs we conſtantly add to them our fervent prayers, that God would enable and ſtrengthen, both us, and all that ſerve him in the goſpel of his Son, to perform our duty with faithfulneſs and ſucceſs. For *we are not ſufficient to think any thing of ourſelves: our ſufficiency is of God* ‡. What therefore we ought, every one of us, to beg of him at all times, let us all at preſent jointly addreſs to him for, in the comprehenſive and expreſſive words of our public ſervice.

Almighty and everlaſting God, by whoſe Spirit the whole body of the church is governed and ſanctified; receive our ſupplications and prayers, which we offer before thee for all eſtates of men in thy holy church; that every member of the ſame, in his vocation and miniſtry, may truly and godly ſerve thee, through our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. Amen ||.

* Matth. v. 13. † Mark ix. 50. ‡ 2 Cor. iii. 5.
|| Second Collect for *Good Friday*.

A CHARGE

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CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE

OF

OXFORD:

In the Year 1741.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

WHEN I had firſt the pleaſure of meeting you, being very much a ſtranger, I could only lay before you ſuch general admonitions as appeared to be ſeaſonable in this unhappy age of irreligion and libertiniſm. But having now obtained a fuller acquaintance with things, chiefly from your anſwers to my printed enquiries, which have given me many reaſons to eſteem and reſpect you; I ſhall at preſent deſcend into ſome farther particulars: and, conſidering you, not merely as miniſters of the goſpel at large, but as miniſters of the ſeveral pariſhes in which you officiate, remind you of ſome plain directions for your doing it more ſucceſsfully; which I ſhall deliver with leſs diffidence, and you will receive with greater regard, for their being chiefly ſuch as have been often recommended with good effect on ſuch occaſions as this.

I begin with one of the loweſt in appearance, but not the

leaſt important eccleſiaſtical employments: Catechizing the children under your care.

The catechiſm conſiſts of the fundamental articles of Chriſtian faith and practice. Without learning theſe we know not ſo much as what it is we profeſs to be; and there is great danger that unleſs perſons learn them at firſt, they will never learn them thoroughly; but only pick up from what they hear or read, unconnected and ſometimes ill grounded notions, that will never unite into a complete or a conſiſtent form of ſound doctrine; as I apprehend we have had too much experience. The Rubric therefore requires, *that every perſon learn the catechiſm before his confirmation:* and the 59th Canon, that *every incumbent ſhall examine and inſtruct the young and ignorant of his pariſh in it for half an hour or more every Sunday.* Every ſecond Sunday had been appointed before; but that I ſuppoſe was judged afterwards inſufficient. Not that a ſtrict obſervation of this rule was probably expected, during the winter ſeaſon, in the generality of country pariſhes, or where the children being few were more eaſily taught. But plainly it was intended, that how much time ſoever was needful to do this work well, ſhould be faithfully employed in it. I thank God, there are very few places in this Dioceſe, and I hope there will ſoon be none, where catechizing is omitted. But I obſerve, that in many it is practiſed only during Lent. Now I ſhould apprehend that the ſummer ſeaſon would in general be much more convenient, both for the miniſter and the congregation. But at leaſt the ſpace of a few weeks is by no means ſufficient to fix the knowledge of their Chriſtian duty ſo firmly in the minds of young people, but that in the many months which paſs from the end of one Lent to the beginning of another, a great part of it will be to learn again. Therefore whenever this exerciſe is begun, it ſhould be continued much longer; and whenever the conſtant repetition of it is left off, it ſhould be occaſionally reſumed for a Sunday or two, at proper diſtances of time.

Another defect in ſome places is, that barely the words of the catechiſm are taught without any expoſition. Now the very plaineſt expreſſions in it will need to be varied into others that are equivalent: elſe children will too often learn nothing but the ſound; and unleſs this danger, which is a very great one, be guarded againſt, you will have ſpent both their

their pains and your own to but ſmall purpoſe. Beſides, all ſciences have their terms, which muſt be interpreted to beginners; and ſome of thoſe in the catechiſm are figurative ones; very prudently uſed, as they comprehend in a little compaſs much meaning, and lead to the underſtanding of the ſame figures in ſcripture; but undoubtedly uſed on purpoſe to be explained; without which they are liable to make either no impreſſion, or a wrong one. And farther ſtill, a ſyſtem ſo long as to be learned by heart, muſt have need, were it ever ſo clear, to be enlarged on; the proofs of its truth, the connections and tendency of its doctrines, the uſe and extent of its precepts to be ſhown; and therefore ſince the canon with great reaſon enjoins, not only that you examine, but inſtruct the children in their catechiſm, I hope you will think this a very needful part of that inſtruction. As to the manner of it, that may be different, not only in different places, but in the ſame at different times. Sometimes a continued diſcourſe of ſome length may be requiſite; as it will lay before the adult part of your pariſhioners a methodical ſummary of Chriſtian doctrine; which they often want very much for themſelves, and will thus be enabled to teach ſomething of to their children, after they have heard it together from you.

Sometimes a curſory expoſition of the more difficult expreſſions may deſerve the preference. But aſking the children queſtions, relating to each part, and procuring them to learn texts of ſcripture confirming each, will be always beneficial. The words of the catechiſm itſelf may be very uſefully broken into ſhort queſtions and anſwers: to which others may be added out of any one of the many good expoſitions that have been made public. Only you ſhould endeavour as ſoon and as much as you can to make this a trial and improvement of the underſtanding as well as the memory of young people, by aſking ſuch things as they ſhould reply to in words of their own; making that eaſy to them in every poſſible way. And indeed, if many of your queſtions were formed to be anſwered merely by affirming or denying, it would be a very good method: and there is an expoſition drawn up in that manner.

I am ſenſible that ſome clergymen are unhappily obliged to ſerve two churches the ſame afternoon; who may therefore

plead, that they have ſcarce ever time to hear the children repeat their catechiſm, much leſs to explain it to them. And God forbid that any needleſs addition ſhould ever be made to their burthen. But as I am ſure they will be deſirous of doing what they are able, in a matter of this importance, ſo I ſhould hope, that in the longer days, at each of their churches alternately, they might hear the catechiſm repeated one Sunday, and expound part of it another, or hear only part of it repeated, and expound that, or find ſome way to prevent the intire omiſſion of ſo neceſſary a duty. And if theſe can do any thing of this kind, there is no doubt but others may eaſily do more.

But a farther hindrance which I fear you complain of too juſtly is, that parents and maſters are negligent in ſending their children and ſervants; and the latter eſpecially are both unwilling and often aſhamed to come. Now the Canon doth indeed make proviſion for puniſhing ſuch. But perſuading them would be much happier. And ſurely in ſo clear a caſe, well timed and well judged arguments, if perſiſted in, muſt do a great deal. The example of their equals or their betters, if you have any under your care that are wiſe enough to ſet a good one; or however, that of your own families may help very much; and ſuch little rewards of good books, or other encouragements as you can give or procure for them, it may be hoped, will completely prevail with them. At leaſt ſuch as think they are either too old or too conſiderable to ſay the catechiſm themſelves, may be greatly improved by hearing others repeat, and you explain it.

But in ſome few places it is pleaded, that the children cannot read, and their parents either cannot or will not get them taught, and therefore the foundation for their learning the catechiſm is wanting. But ſurely ſome perſon might be found, within a moderate diſtance from every place, to whom parents might be induced, at leaſt if ſomething were contributed towards it, to ſend their children to be inſtructed thus far. Or, at the worſt, they who cannot read might eaſily by degrees learn ſo much as the catechiſm by heart: eſpecially as the three main parts of it are in every Sunday's prayers. The incapacity of reading was almoſt general at the time of the Reformation; yet even in thoſe days the clergy, were able to

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teach firſt parents and houſholders, then by their means children and ſervants, the Lord's prayer, the creed, and the ten commandments; and afterwards the reſt of the catechiſm. Now, ſince that groſs darkneſs hath been ſo far enlightened, it cannot be impracticable to diſpel the remains of it.

After due inſtruction follows confirmation: an appointment derived down from apoſtolical practice; and of ſuch acknowledged uſefulneſs, that in the times of confuſion, a hundred years ago, when biſhops were rejected, ſome of their adverſaries took upon them to perform this part of their function; and within theſe few years the church of Geneva hath reſtored it in the beſt manner their form of church-government will admit, and added an office for it to their liturgy. In our own church the ancient eſteem of this inſtitution is, generally ſpeaking, ſo well preſerved, that I hope the deſire of being confirmed may not a little ſtrengthen that of being inſtructed, as the only way to it. And yet I muſt obſerve, that the numbers from ſome pariſhes have been in proportion very ſmall. This may not have ariſen from any neglect in the miniſter; but as it ought to incline me to make the oportunities of confirmation as convenient as I am able; ſo it ought to incline you, agreeably to the nature of your function, and the expreſs direction of the 61ſt Canon, to uſe your beſt endeavours, that your pariſhioners may gladly take thoſe opportunities. Yet I muſt entreat you to endeavour, at the ſame time, that none be brought, but thoſe who, to ſpeak in the language of the Rubric, *are come to years of diſcretion*, who have learned, not the words only, but, in a competent degree, the meaning of what was promiſed for them in baptiſm; who can ſay with ſerioufneſs and truth, (what ſurely elſe they ought not to ſay at all,) that *in the preſence of God and the congregation they ratify and confirm the ſame in their own perſons*; and who therefore are likely to have uſeful and laſting impreſſions made on them by this ſolemnity. Undoubtedly ſome arrive at this capacity ſooner than others, and therefore I have mentioned the age of fourteen, not with a deſign of abſolutely tying you down to it; but as being, for the moſt part, full early enough; and that, where you ſee it requiſite, you may, without giving offence yourſelves, oppoſe my order to the indiſcreet forwardneſs of parents; whom however, I hope, it will

will make eaſy, to aſſure them, as I give you authority, that ſo long as it pleaſes God to continue my health and ſtrength, confirmations ſhall be frequent in every part of this Dioceſe. I muſt alſo deſire that you will carefully inſtruct thoſe whom you do bring, in the whole nature of the inſtitution, and particularly in this, amongſt other more important points, that they are never to be confirmed any more than baptized a ſecond time: that you will direct them to make the proper anſwers audibly through the whole of the office, which many of them ſeem to have no notion of, though it is ſo neceſſary in the nature of the thing, and tends ſo much both to fix their attention, and to give the ſolemnity a decent and ediſying appearance. You will caution them likewiſe not to crowd forward and incommode each other, uſing this argument for one, that the whole number who come in at the ſame time, will be diſmiſſed at the ſame time alſo; and laſtly, you will preſs it ſtrongly upon their minds, that what they promiſe at their confirmation, they are to remember and keep to their lives end. I have already deſired of you, on theſe occaſions, a liſt of ſuch as you judge qualified; that ſo the numbers and perſons may be known; of this you would do well to keep a copy yourſelves, and if it were written alphabetically, both you and I ſhould be able to conſult it upon the ſpot more eaſily. For the above-mentioned Canon, the 61ſt, plainly directs your attendance along with your pariſhioners; to take eſpecial care (for ſo the words run) *that none be preſented but ſuch as you know are fit.* And as your being preſent to approve or diſapprove muſt needs increaſe your influence and authority amongſt your people; it muſt likewiſe make the diſcharge of my duty ſo very much eaſier and more uſeful, that I beg you will never let me be without your aſſiſtance in this work, as you ſhall never be without mine in any thing. And for this purpoſe, when confirmations are on a Sunday, which is the time I ſhall uſually pitch upon, for the convenience of the people, excepting at the places of my viſitation, you may omit for that day the morning or the evening prayers as you ſee occaſion. I have not, indeed, hitherto been able to effect, what would greatly ſhorten your labour, calling up your ſeveral pariſhes in their order ſeparately. But I ſhall be very glad to do it, as ſoon as ever you can introduce this order amongſt them, which I earneſtly recommend to you: and I hope a continued

tinued frequency of confirmations will ſoon make that feaſible without difficulty here, which is now practiſed conſtantly in the populous cities of London and Weſtminſter.

From confirmation, perſons ought to be led on, if poſſible, before the impreſſions of it are much weakened, to the holy ſacrament: and it is one material reaſon why confirmation ſhould not be too early, that with a little farther inſtruction given ſoon after it, you may eaſily bring them, ſuch as they ought to be, to the Lord's table: which may prove a much harder matter, when once they have been a good while out of your hands. The ſmall proportion of communicants which I find there is in moſt of your congregations, and very ſmall in ſome, muſt undoubtedly (as this ordinance is appointed for all Chriſtians, and for a ſtanding means of grace to all) be a ſubject of very great concern to you. And though it is too true, that the generality of the world, and perhaps the lower ſort beyond others, are incredibly obſtinate in their prejudices, eſpecially in ſuch as at all favour corrupt nature: yet our complaining of theſe prejudices is not enough; but labouring to overcome them is our buſineſs; and we are not to grow weary of it. Some imagine that the ſacrament belongs only to perſons of advanced years, or great leiſure, or high attainments in religion, and is a very dangerous thing for common perſons to venture upon. Some again diſregard it ſtupidly, becauſe others, they ſay, who do receive are never the better for it; or becauſe their friends before them, or their neighbours about them never received at all, or not till ſuch an age; and why ſhould they? You will therefore repreſent to them, that whoever receives without benefit, it is his own fault; and that how many ſoever omit it, either for part of their lives or the whole, not their example, but the word of God is the rule for Chriſtians: that far from being a terrible or enſnaring inſtitution, it is in reality a moſt gracious one: deſigned to be celebrated with humility indeed, but with comfort and joy: that all the preparation it requires is within the reach of the plaineſt head and the moſt laborious hand, provided there be only an honeſt and pious heart; and that the judgment which unworthy receivers eat and drink to themſelves, needs no more affright thoſe whom God in his mercy will conſider as worthy; as he certainly will every true penitent; than the capital puniſhments, threatened by

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the law to crimes, make innocent perſons uneaſy; that he whoſe life unfits him for the ſacrament, is unfit for the kingdom of heaven alſo; and he, who being qualified for it, neglects it, neglects a dying command of his Lord and Saviour, intended for the greateſt good to him. But your public inſtructions on this head will be much more effectual for being followed by ſeaſonable private applications: in which you will hear and anſwer their objections, be they of ever ſo little weight, with great meekneſs; not be provoked by any perverſeneſs of theirs to ſhow anger, but only a friendly concern; and even if you meet with an abſolute repulſe, leave them with an aſſurance that you ſhall apply to them again, in hopes that God will have diſpoſed them better to obey his precepts.

But beſides increaſing the number of your communicants, it were very deſirable, that they who do communicate ſhould do it more frequently. In the three firſt centuries the euchariſt was every where celebrated weekly, and in many places almoſt daily. Decay of piety occaſioned an injunction in the ſixth, that every Chriſtian ſhould receive thrice in the year; which was reduced in the thirteenth, perhaps with a bad intention, to once. Our church requires thrice *at the leaſt*: which evidently implies, that more than thrice is hoped for. And indeed each perſon will ſcarce be able to communicate ſo often unleſs the communion be adminiſtered oftener. But beſides, it is appointed to be every Lord's day in Cathedral and Collegiate churches, and part of the office for it is read every Lord's day in every church, for an admonition of what it were to be wiſhed the people could be brought to. This indeed at beſt muſt be a work of time; but one thing might be done at preſent in all your pariſhes, as, God be thanked, it is in moſt of them: a ſacrament might eaſily be interpoſed in that long interval between Whitſuntide and Chriſtmas: and the uſual ſeaſon for it, about the feaſt of St Michael, (when your people having gathered in the fruits of the earth have ſome reſt from their labours, and muſt ſurely feel ſome gratitude to the giver of all good) is a very proper time. And if afterwards you can advance from a quarterly communion to a monthly one, I make no doubt but you will.

Upon this ſubject I muſt obſerve to you farther, that though in one or two pariſhes of this Dioceſe the old cuſtom is re-

retained,

tained, of oblations for the miniſter, as well as alms for the poor, to both which the ſentences appointed to be read are plainly adapted: yet in many pariſhes there is no offertory at all: tho' it be certainly a practice of primitive antiquity, a moſt proper admonition and ſpecimen of charity; which I fear the generality of Chriſtians much want to be reminded of; a moſt ſeaſonable demonſtration of our loving our brethren for his ſake, who hath loved us; and a thing expreſsly joined in the Rubric of the communion office. Why therefore ſhould you not attempt to revive it, where it hath been intermitted? Merely preſenting to perſons an opportunity of giving if they think fit, and only what they think fit, can ſurely (if the reaſons of it be explained to them beforehand) never keep any one away from the ſacrament. But then, though all who have not abſolutely nothing, ought undoubtedly to contribute their mite; yet no diſagreeable notice ſhould ever be taken of any, for giving but little, or not giving at all: and whatever is collected, ſhould be diſpoſed of, ſo that all perſons may know it, with the greateſt faithfulneſs, prudence, and impartiality.

Another part of Divine worſhip, concerning which I think it needful to ſpeak, is pſalmody: a part clearly appointed in ſcripture, both expreſſive and productive of devout affections, extremely well fitted to diverſify long ſervices, and peculiarly to diſtinguiſh the ſeveral parts of our own, which were originally ſeparate. Our eccleſiaſtical laws do not indeed require it under any penalty: becauſe there may not every where be perſons qualified to perform it decently. But where-ever there are, the Rubric makes proviſion for it, and I recommend to you that it be not omitted. You will always endeavour that your Pariſh Clerks be perſons of diſcretion as well as ſkill and ſerioufneſs. But however, you will be much furer of no impropriety happening in this part of the worſhip, if you either direct them every Sunday to ſuitable pſalms, or aſſign them a courſe of ſuch to go orderly through. And unleſs the generality of your pariſhioners are provided with books and able to make uſe of them: ordering each line to be read, will both ſecure a greater number of ſingers, and be very inſtructive to many who cannot ſing. All perſons indeed who are by nature qualified ought to learn, and conſtantly join to glorify him that made them, in pſalms and ſpiritual ſongs.

This was the practice of the early Chriſtians; it was reſtored very juſtly at the Reformation; and hath declined of late, within moſt of our memories, very unhappily. For the improvements made by a few in church-muſic, were they real improvements, will ſeldom equal the harmony of a general chorus; in which any leſſer diſſonances are quite loſt; and it is ſomething inexpreſſibly elevating, to hear the *voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters and of mighty thunders*, to ſpeak in the words of ſcripture, *making a joyful noiſe to the God of their ſalvation, and ſinging his praiſes with underſtanding*. Perſons of a ludicrous turn may repreſent every thing in a wrong light; but thoſe of any ſeriouſneſs, if they will lay aſide falſe delicacy, and that prepoſterous ſhame of religious performances, with which the preſent age is ſo fatally tainted, will find themſelves very pioufly affected only by hearing this melody, much more by bearing a part in it; and therefore I beg you will encourage all your pariſhioners, eſpecially the youth, to learn pſalmody: and excite them, if there be need, with ſome little reward; for you will thus make the ſervice of God abundantly more agreeable, and their attendance on it more conſtant. But then, where any knowledge of the old common tunes remains, you ſhould endeavour principally, that your learners may perfect themſelves in theſe; that ſo they may lead and aſſiſt the reſt of the congregation, who ſhould always join with them; or if you muſt admit a mixture of new and uncommon tunes, it ſhould be no greater than you find yourſelves in prudence abſolutely obliged to. Elſe the conſequence will be, what I fear many of you have experienced, that either one part of your people will reſent being unjuſtly ſilenced, and this by the introduction of tunes often not ſo good as their former ones, and ſo your pariſh will be divided and uneaſy; or if they agree to the change ever ſo generally, and like it ever ſo well, yet your ſelect ſingers will either be weary in a while of what only novelty recommended to them, or grow conceited and ungovernable, or die off, or be diſperſed, and the congregation will be left unable to ſing in any manner at all. Where indeed the newer tunes have quite blotted out the memory of the old ones, all you can do is, to make uſe of what you find in uſe, to get ſome of the eaſieſt of them learnt as generally as you can, and keep to theſe. And if, in order to inſtruct your people in either

way

way of ſinging, meetings to practiſe out of Church-time be requiſite, you will keep a ſtrict watch over them, that they be managed with all poſſible decency, and never continued till candle-light, if they conſiſt of both ſexes. You will likewiſe diſcountenance, at leaſt, all frequent meetings, between the ſingers of different pariſhes, and making appointments to ſing alternately at one anothers churches: for this wandering from their own, which by law they ought to keep to, uſually leads them into exceſſes and follies.

I am very ſenſible, that ſome of the things which I have been mentioning, are by no means of equal importance with others. But nothing is without its importance, that relates to Divine worſhip. The mere outward behaviour of thoſe who attend upon it is of ſuch uſe, and good influence, that I muſt deſire you will be diligent in teaching them, (but ſo as to perſuade, not provoke them) what reverence belongs to the houſe of God: particularly how very wrong it is to ſit inſtead of kneeling when they are or ſhould be addreſſing themſelves to their Maker, and to ſhow how indecent that appearance is of diſregard to him, which they would not uſe on any account to one of their fellow-creatures a little ſuperior to themſelves. If you could only breed up the younger to a right behaviour in this reſpect, your congregations would grow regular in time. But mild expoſtulations will ſurely in ſo plain a caſe produce ſome effect upon the reſt alſo, which will be much facilitated if you take care that proper conveniences for kneeling be provided for them. And if you could convince them alſo that ſtanding is a more reverent poſture to ſing pſalms to God in, as well as to read them, than ſitting, you would come ſo much the nearer to the apoſtolical rule *of doing all things decently*. For as ſome of the pſalms contain the nobleſt acts of adoration, ſurely they ought not to be ſung in a poſture unfit to expreſs it. Another thing, and no ſmall one, which I believe many of your pariſhioners often want to be admoniſhed of, is to come before the ſervice begins. Undoubtedly allowance is to be made for neceſſary, eſpecially unforeſeen, buſineſs, and ſome allowance for not knowing the time exactly; but I hope you will obviate both theſe pleas as far as you can, by conſulting their convenience in the hour you fix, and then keeping punctually to it. And at the ſame time you will remind them, that a due degree of zeal

in religion would incline them to be rather a great deal too early at the houſe of God, than a little too late: that no part of the ſervice can be more needful for them, than that which comes firſt; the confeſſion of their ſins: that inſtruction in their duty is better learnt from the pſalms and leſſons, which are the word of God, than from ſermons, which are only our explanations of it; and that by coming ſo irregularly, they not only are great loſers themſelves, but diſturb and offend others.

But it is not ſufficient to give you directions about ſuch as do come to church, without taking notice of the great numbers which I find there are in many, if not moſt of your pariſhes, that omit coming. Now on theſe your preaching indeed can have no immediate influence. But it may however prevent the increaſe of them; and furniſh others with arguments againſt them; and with the beſt of arguments, their experience of its good effects. You will therefore queſtionleſs do all you can this way, without uſing any expreſſions in relation to their fault, which, if repeated to them, may exaſperate them. But your chief dependance muſt be on private application to them, varied ſuitably to the occaſion of their neglect. If it ariſes merely from ignorance, or ſloth, or want of thought, they muſt be plainly told what they owe to their Maker, and awakened to the hopes and fears of a future life. If it be deſire of gain or of pleaſure that keeps them away, they muſt be aſked what it will *profit them to gain the whole world and loſe their own ſouls?* or ſhown, that to be lovers *of pleaſure more than of God* will end in pains eternal. If they defend themſelves, by pleading, as ſome will, that nothing can be told them at church, but what they are acquainted with already, it will ſurely not be hard to ſhow them that they over-rate their knowledge: that if this were otherwiſe, they might however be reminded of what they did not think of, or excited to what they did not practiſe: that, were they too perfect to receive any benefit, it would not be decent for them to tell the world ſo by their behaviour: that at leaſt they ought to ſet others an example, who may be the better for public inſtruction: and laſtly, that receiving inſtruction is not the whole of divine ſervice, but praying the chief part. And though it is allowed they can pray at home privately, yet without enquiring whether they do, ſince God hath commanded

manded, for plain and important reaſons, that we worſhip him publicly, and hath excepted no one; by what authority doth any one except himſelf? And what will this end in, but an univerſal neglect of a duty which our Maker hath required to be univerſally practiſed? If it be any ſcruple about the lawfulneſs of coming to church that keeps perſons away, fit opportunities ſhould be ſought with great care, and uſed with great prudence, to ſet them right: and ſuch diſſenters, for many there are, as do not think our manner of worſhip ſinful, but only prefer another, which perhaps they are often without the means of attending upon, ſhould be ſeriouſly entreated to conſider, how they can juſtify ſeparating from a lawful communion appointed by lawful authority, and even omitting all public worſhip frequently, rather than worſhip with us. But then, with which ſoever of theſe perſons we diſcourſe, not the leaſt perſonal anger muſt be ſhewn: nothing but a concern about their future happineſs. For, by this means, if we make them no better, we ſhall at leaſt make them no worſe, and perhaps may leave in their hearts what will ſome time or other work there. Perſons who profeſs themſelves not to be of our church, if perſuaſions will not avail, muſt be let alone. But other abſenters, after due patience, muſt be told in the laſt place, that unwilling as you are, it will be your duty to preſent them, unleſs they reform: and if, when this warning hath been repeated, and full time allowed for it to work, they ſtill perſiſt in their obſtinacy, I beg you to do it. For this will tend much to prevent the contagion from ſpreading, of which there is elſe great danger: and when once you have got them, though it be againſt their inclinations, within reach of your pulpit, who knows what good may follow? Different caſes may indeed require difference of treatment: and both the ſame ſeverity and the ſame mildneſs that will ſubdue one, will harden another. You will therefore act yourſelves, and adviſe your Church-wardens to act in this matter, according to your diſcretion. And after a proſecution is begun, it ſhall ſtill depend on your opinion whether it ſhall be carried on with rigour, or ſuſpended a while in hopes of amendment. Only one caution I would give you: Let not any perſon's threatenings, that, if he is proſecuted he will go over to the Diſſenters, move you in the leaſt. Such will ſeldom do what they threaten; or, if they do, 'tis better they ſhould ſerve

God

God in any way than none; and much better they should be a disgrace to them than to us. I must not conclude this head without desiring you to remind your people, that our Liturgy consists not only of morning, but evening prayer also; that the latter is in proportion equally edifying and instructive with the former; and so short, that, generally speaking, there can arise no inconvenience from attending upon it, provided persons are within any tolerable distance from the church; that few of them have business at that time of the day; and amusements ought surely never to be preferred on the Lord's day before religion; not to say that there is room for both.

But besides the public service, your people should be admonished to spend a due part of their Sabbath in private exercises of piety. For this is almost the only time that the far greater part of them have, for meditating on what they have already heard at church; for reading the scripture and other good books; for the serious consideration of their ways; or giving such instruction to their children and families, as will make your work both easier and more effectual. And therefore, though one would not by any means make their day of rest wearisome, nor forbid cheerfulness, and even innocent festivity upon it, much less the expressions of neighbourly civility and good-will, which are indeed a valuable part of the gracious ends of the institution; yet employing a reasonable share of it seriously at home as well as at church, and preserving an especial reverence of God, even throughout the freer hours of it, is necessary to make it a blessing to them in reality, instead of a season of leisure to ruin themselves, as it proves too often.

But farther, besides your and their duty on the Lord's day, it is appointed, that all ministers of parishes read prayers on holidays, on Wednesdays, and Fridays: and undoubtedly your endeavours to procure a congregation at such times ought not to be wanting. Were I to repeat to you the strong expressions which my great predecessor Bishop Fell used, in requiring this part of ecclesiastical duty, they would surprize you. But I content myself with saying, that public worship was from the very first ages constantly performed on the two stationary days of each week; that all holidays appointed by the

the church were carefully obſerved by the clergy, and the number of them now is not burthenſome: that where you can get a competent number to attend at theſe times, you will act a very pious and uſeful, as well as regular part: that your own houſes will ſometimes furniſh a ſmall congregation; and what ſucceſs you may have with others, nothing but trials, repeated from time to time, can inform you. But they, whoſe pariſhioners are the feweſt and the buſieſt of all, I hope do not fail of bringing them to church, at the leaſt on Good-Friday, and Chriſtmas-day, beſides Sundays. For though in ſome of your anſwers to my enquiries, theſe are not mentioned as prayer-days, yet I preſume that this aroſe from your taking it for granted I ſhould underſtand they were. But if in any place they be not, I earneſtly entreat they may: for at ſuch times there can be no difficulty of getting a congregation. I hope likewiſe, that you are not wanting in due regard to thoſe which are uſually called State Holidays: and particularly, that of the public faſt, which hath been appointed theſe two laſt years, (as we have but too much reaſon to apprehend there will be need) I beg you will endeavour, not only to bring your pariſhioners to church on that occaſion, but move them to ſuch inward humiliation for their own ſins, and ſuch fervency of prayer for this moſt corrupt and wicked nation, as may avert, if it be poſſible, the juſt judgments of God which ſo violently threaten us.

You muſt have underſtood, Brethren, in all you have heard, that I am not exhorting you to promote in your pariſhes a mere form of godlineſs without the power. Outward obſervances, by whatever authority appointed, are only valuable in proportion as they proceed from a good heart, and become means of edification and grace. They are always to be reverently regarded, but never reſted in; for perſons may obſerve without the leaſt benefit, what they cannot omit without great ſin. The buſineſs of your pariſhioners therefore is, ſo to uſe the external part of religion, as to be inwardly improved by it in love to God and their fellow-creatures, and in moral ſelf-government; and your buſineſs is, to apply both your public and private diligence, that this happy end be effectually attained. You have under your care great numbers of poor creatures, living very laborious lives in this world, and depending

pending almoſt entirely on you for their hopes of another. It is a noble employment to direct their behaviour and lighten their toils here, by precepts and motives which lead them on at the ſame time to happineſs hereafter. You will be ſure of their acknowledgments at leaſt in proportion as you ſucceed in this work; but you will be rewarded by God in proportion as you endeavour it. Think not therefore, that I am laying burthens on you, but only *ſtirring up your minds by way of remembrance*, and exhorting you ſo to watch for the ſouls of men, as they *that muſt give account, that you may do it with joy and not with grief.* It is very little in my power either to increaſe or leſſen your duty. Our bleſſed Maſter hath fixed it: you have undertaken it: and were I to releaſe you from ever ſo great a part of it, I ſhould only bring guilt on myſelf, without acquitting you at all. The injunctions of the New Teſtament, infinitely ſtricter than any of men, would continue to bind you as firmly as ever. Take *heed therefore to the miniſtry which you have received in the Lord, that you fulfil it.*

Having a ſubject of ſuch a nature to ſpeak to you upon, and being able to ſpeak to you in a body but once in three years, you muſt not wonder if I go ſomewhat beyond the bounds of a common diſcourſe. There are many other things, and very material ones, relating to you as pariſh-miniſters, which I could have wiſhed to mention now: but I was willing to treat firſt of ſuch matters as belong more immediately to the worſhip of God. If it pleaſe him that I live to another viſitation, I ſhall in that proceed to the reſt. Permit me now to add but one word or two more upon a different ſubject, and I have done.

Whilſt we are ſerving Chriſtianity here, with the advantage of a legal eſtabliſhment and maintenance, there are vaſt multitudes of our fellow-ſubjects in America, their negro-ſlaves, and the neighbouring Indians, amongſt whom the knowledge of God is taught, and the exerciſes of his worſhip ſupported, if at all, very imperfectly, and with great difficulty, by the ſociety for propagating the goſpel: the income of which depends entirely on the voluntary contributions of good Chriſtians; and is now reduced ſo low, and burthened with ſuch a debt, that they find it neceſſary to propoſe, this

next year, according to the powers of their charter, and with his Majeſty's recommendatory letters, a general collection, which they have not had for above twenty years paſt, to enable them to go on. Application will probably not be made to every pariſh ſeparately. But I hope every miniſter will give this excellent deſign all the aſſiſtance in his power; ſuch as can afford it, either by becoming ſtated contributors and members of the ſociety, or at leaſt by ſome occaſional benefaction in this time of need; and all, by recommending the caſe to ſuch of their people or acquaintance as they have reaſon to think will pay regard to it. If any perſon deſires a more particular acquaintance with the nature and uſefulneſs, and preſent condition of this undertaking, I have given ſome account of theſe matters in a ſermon at their anniverſary meeting, lately publiſhed by me, and ſhall be ready to give any of you farther information, who ſhall either now or hereafter apply to me for it, perſonally or by letter.

But I muſt not yet conclude, without mentioning alſo the ſociety for promoting Chriſtian knowledge; who are carrying on the ſame good work in the Eaſt Indies, which that for propagating the goſpel is in the Weſt; and at the ſame time are promoting the cauſe of religion many ways here at home: particularly by ſelling, at very low rates, Bibles, common-prayers, and numbers of other religious books, chiefly of ſmall ſizes, for the uſe of the poor. This they alſo are ſupported in by voluntary benefactions: to which whoever is able to contribute, will do a very good work; and whoever can only purchaſe a few of their books for the uſe of his pariſhioners, ſhall have both my beſt aſſiſtance in it, and my hearty thanks for it.

I do not mean at all, in ſpeaking of theſe things, to preſcribe to you the methods of your charity; but only to lay before you two very deſerving ones, which may poſſibly have eſcaped the notice of ſome of you; and to endeavour, that the cauſe of our Lord and Maſter may be ſerved in as many ways as it can: for you muſt be ſenſible how very great need there is that none be neglected.

By zealouſly making uſe of ſuch as are preſented to us,

we may possibly be of much more service to others than we may expect; but we shall be sure of doing infinite service to ourselves.

And *may God stir up the wills of all his faithful people, that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of him be plenteously rewarded, through Jesus Christ our Lord**.

* Collect for the 25th Sunday after Trinity.

A CHARGE

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE

OF

OXFORD.

In the Year 1747.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

I Cannot ſpeak to you thus aſſembled, without congratulating you in the firſt place on the happy ſuppreſſion of that unnatural rebellion, which, ſince we met laſt, hath threatened our religion and liberties. Nor will either my duty, or my inclination, ſuffer me to omit returning you my heartieſt thanks, for the unanimous zeal you expreſſed againſt it; and, I doubt not, were ready to expreſs, even before the exhortation to do ſo, which I was directed to ſend you, and which you received with ſo obliging a regard. Your behaviour, and that of the whole clergy, on this trying occaſion, hath abounded with ſuch proofs of loyalty and affection to the government, under which God's mercy hath placed us, that his Majeſty hath declared, he ſhall ever have the ſtrongeſt ſenſe of what you have done for the ſupport of his throne, and gladly ſhow his gratitude by any proper methods of extending his Royal favour to you and to religion. It may be hoped alſo,

that our fellow-ſubjects will remember, what they owe to our long deſpiſed and reproached labours: and learn, how eſſential a part the Church of England is of our preſent eſtabliſhment. Indeed, not only the more candid of thoſe, who thought amiſs of us, have acknowledged our merit now; but the *lying lips* are *put to ſilence, which diſdainfully and deſpitefully* ſpoke *againſt us* *. And let us go on, brethren, to expreſs the warmeſt and moſt prudent zeal for what we doubly felt the value of, when we feared to loſe it: and ſo behave in this and all reſpects, that *they who are of the contrary part may be aſhamed, having no evil thing to ſay of us* †. For however imperfectly men may do us juſtice, our reward from God is ſure.

I have recommended to you, in the courſe of my former viſitations, various parts of your duty: Firſt in general, as miniſters of the goſpel in a vicious and profane age; then more particularly, as incumbents of your reſpective pariſhes. Under this latter head, I began with what immediately relates to the worſhip of God: and now proceed to another point, of a temporal nature indeed, as it may ſeem, but ſeveral ways connected with ſpirituals; the care you are bound to take of the incomes ariſing from your benefices. Theſe endowments are ſacred to the purpoſes of piety and charity: and it is neither lawful for us to employ them unſuitably ourſelves, nor to let any part of them become a prey to the avarice of others. The few that may appear to be larger than was neceſſary, are in truth but needful encouragements to the breeding up of youth for holy orders. And were they leſſened, either an inſufficient number would be deſtined to that ſervice, or too many of them would be of the loweſt rank, unable to bear the expence of acquiring due knowledge, and unlikely to be treated with due regard. Beſides, the moſt plentiful of theſe revenues may be well applied to religious uſes: and therefore, as they have been dedicated, ought to continue appropriated, to them. But the generality of them, it will ſurely be owned, are ſmall enough; and a very great part of them left ſo utterly incompetent, by the ravages of former times, that the little which remains, demands our ſtricteſt care now. For, without it, poor incumbents will not be able to maintain themſelves decently, much leſs to exerciſe hoſpitality

* Pſal. xxxi. 20. † Tit. ii. 8.

lity and charity towards others. Yet on theſe things both their ſpirit and their ſucceſs in doing their duty greatly depend. And therefore how indifferent ſoever any of us may have cauſe to be about our own intereſts, we ought to conſider ourſelves as truſtees for our ſucceſſors. We all blame our predeceſſors, if they have not tranſmitted the patrimony of the church undiminiſhed into our hands. Let us think then what others hereafter will ſay of us, and with what reaſon, if we are guilty of the ſame fault; and give away for ever, what we ſhould count it ſacrilege in any one elſe to take from us.

Indeed ſome perſons imagine or pretend that the only danger is, of the clergy's encroaching on the properties of the laity, not neglecting their own. And we acknowledge there have been times, when that was the danger. But they are long paſt; and God forbid we ſhould deſire to revive them. Placing exceſſive wealth in the hands of eccleſiaſtics, would both endanger others and corrupt them: as the examples of paſt ages have too fully ſhewn. But the parochial clergy of thoſe times, inſtead of being the authors of this error, were the heavieſt ſufferers by it. And to renew the attempt in theſe days, would be folly equal to its wickedneſs: of which we ſhould ſo certainly and immediately be made ſenſible, indeed we are ſo univerſally ſenſible of it already, that there can be no need of giving cautions on this head. All we wiſh for is, the unmoleſted enjoyment of what clearly belongs to us, and a reaſonable allowance of what is confeſſedly requiſite for us, in order to attain the only ends of our inſtitution, the preſent and future happineſs of mankind. In how many and ſad inſtances we fail of poſſeſſing in peace ſuch a competent proviſion, I need not ſay. Let us all behave under whatever uſage we receive, with the innocence and the prudence, which our Maſter enjoins. But we ſhall be wanting in both, if we wrong ourſelves and thoſe that will come after us, by improper voluntary diminutions of what is allotted for our ſupport: which, through inconſiderateneſs and indolence, hath been often done; deſignedly, I would hope, but ſeldom. And we may be guilty of it, either at coming into our benefices, or during our incumbency on them, or when we quit them: to which three heads I ſhall ſpeak in their order.

Yet

Yet, indeed, as I am now directing my diſcourſe to perſons, moſt of them already poſſeſſed of benefices, it may ſeem too late to give cautions reſpecting the time of entering upon them. But all who have acted right then, will at leaſt hear with pleaſure their conduct approved. If any have acted wrong, which I do not know that any of you have, on being ſhown it, they may repent of it, they may conſider how far they can undo what they have done, or prevent the bad conſequences that are likely to flow from it. And both ſorts may be influenced more ſtrongly, to take no improper ſteps on any future occaſion, and to warn their friends againſt ſuch errors.

I proceed therefore to ſay, that benefices ought neither to be given, nor accepted, with any other condition or promiſe, than that of doing our duty in relation to them. This engagement is always underſtood, whether it be expreſſed or not; and no other ſhould either be required or complied with. For when biſhops, originally the ſole patrons, to encourage the endowment of pariſhes, gave others a right of preſenting fit perſons to them; or that right was confirmed or granted by the civil power: they muſt be ſuppoſed to give it only to be exerciſed for the future, as it had been before; when, whoever was appointed to any ſtation in the church, enjoyed the benefit of all he was appointed to, ſo long as he behaved well. And therefore, attempting to bring the clergy into a worſe condition, is uſurpation; and ſubmitting to the attempt, is encouraging uſurpation.

Yet there is a great difference between the things to which our ſubmiſſion may be demanded. Some are groſsly and obviouſly unlawful. If, for inſtance, any perſon, in order to obtain a benefice, promiſes to give up ſuch a part of the income, to connive at ſuch a leſſening of it, to accept of ſuch a compoſition for it, to allow ſuch a penſion or make ſuch a payment to any one out of it: theſe things are, in effect, the ſame with laying down beforehand ſuch a ſum for it: which is the neareſt approach, excepting that of bribing for holy orders, to his ſin, who thought the *gifts of God might be purchaſed with money*, and was anſwered, *thy money periſh with thee**. Nor can it take away, if it alleviate the guilt, that the payment

or

* Acts viii. 20.

or penſion, thus reſerved, is allotted to uſes really charitable. Still it is buying what ought to be freely beſtowed: this forced charity muſt diſable a man from voluntary almſgiving, in proportion to its amount: and one compliance in a ſeemingly favourable inſtance, will only make way for another in a more doubtful caſe, and ſo on without end. Another excuſe I hope nobody will plead; that obligations of this kind may be ſafely entered into, ſince they are notoriouſly void. For we can never be at liberty to make an agreement, merely becauſe it is ſo bad a one, that neither law nor conſcience will let us keep it.

But ſuppoſing a perſon binds himſelf to his patron, only that he will quit his benefice when required; even this he ought not to do. For he hath no right to promiſe it; and no power to perform the promiſe. Whoever undertakes the care of a living, muſt continue that care till the law deprives him of it, or his ſuperior releaſes him from it*. Therefore he can only ſubject himſelf to a penalty which another may exact at pleaſure, unleſs he doth what of himſelf he is not able to do, and knows not whether he ſhall obtain permiſſion to do. Can this be prudent? Can it be fit? If he pay the penalty, he gives money to the patron, though not for his firſt poſſeſſion of the benefice, yet for his continuance in it: beſides that, he muſt either diſtreſs himſelf, or defraud religion and charity of what he ought to have beſtowed on them. If then to avoid paying it, he begs leave to reſign, he puts his biſhop under very unreaſonable difficulties; who, by refuſing his requeſt, may bring great inconveniences on the poor man: and, by granting it, may looſe a miniſter from a pariſh, where he was uſeful, and ought to have continued; may expoſe himſelf to the many bad conſequences of having an improper ſucceſſor preſented to him. At leaſt he will encourage a practice undoubtedly wrong and hurtful in the main, whatever it may be in the inſtance before him. And why are not theſe ſufficient grounds for a denial; ſince whatever the incumbent ſuffers by it, he hath brought upon himſelf?

Beſides, in bonds to reſign, where no condition is expreſſed, ſome unfair intention almoſt always lies hid. For if it were an

* See Stillingfleet on Bonds of Reſignation, in the third volume of his works, page 731.

an honeſt one, why ſhould it not be plainly mentioned, and both ſides cleared from imputations? Aſſuredly, unleſs perſons are to a ſtrange degree inconſiderate, this would be done if it could. The true meaning therefore too commonly is, to enſlave the incumbent to the will and pleaſure of his patron, whatever it ſhall happen at any time to be. So that, if he demands his legal dues, if he is not ſubſervient to the ſchemes, political or whatever they are, which he is required to promote; if he reproves ſuch and ſuch vices; if he preaches, or does not preach, ſuch and ſuch doctrines; if he ſtands up for charity and juſtice to any one when he is forbidden: the terror of reſignation, or the penalty of the bond, may immediately be ſhaken over his head. How ſhamefully beneath the dignity of a clergyman is ſuch a ſituation as this! How grievouſly doth it tempt a man to unbecoming, and even unlawful compliances! What ſuſpicions doth it bring upon him, of being unduly influenced when he is not! Or however he may eſcape himſelf, what a ſnare may his example prove to his poor brethren of weaker minds, or leſs eſtabliſhed characters.

To prevent theſe miſchiefs, both the ancient laws of other churches, and thoſe of our own*, ſtill in force, have ſtrictly forbidden ſuch contracts†. Particularly the Council of Oxford, held in 1222, preſcribed an oath againſt Simony, for ſo it is entitled, by which every clerk ſhall ſwear at his inſtitution, that he hath entered into no compact in order to be preſented.

* Stillingfleet, in his Letter about Bonds of Reſignation in Miſcell. diſcourſes, p. 42. &c. ſhews ſeveral ſorts of contracts that are allowed, and objects not againſt truſts and confidences [as indeed I have been aſſured that Dr Bentley held a living in truſt for the Biſhop's ſon] nor againſt what is done, in conſideration of ſervice, without a compact: but only againſt a legal obligation on the party before his preſentation, to perform ſuch a condition; and if he do not, to reſign.

† The Council of Weſtminſter 1138, appoints, that when any one receives Inveſtiture from the Biſhop, he ſhall ſwear that he hath neither given nor promiſed any thing for his Benefice. Spelm. vol. 2. p. 39. apud Gibſon Cod. p. 845.

ſented *. And Archbiſhop Courtney, in his injunctions to all the biſhops of his province in 1391, condemns thoſe, as guilty of Simony, who, before preſentation, engage to reſign when required †; and appoints all perſons inſtituted, to be ſworn ‡, that they have not given, to obtain preſentation, either oath or promiſe to reſign ‖. Again, the conſtitutions of Cardinal Pole, when Archbiſhop, in 1555, cenſure, as being ſimoniacal, all bargains or promiſes for procuring of benefices; and aſſert that benefices ought to be given without any condition, and order that the perſon preſented ſhall ſwear, he hath neither promiſed, nor given, nor exchanged, nor lent, nor depoſited, nor remitted, &c. any thing, nor confirmed any thing given before §. And a convocation held under him, two years after, complaining that, of late years, perſons have procured benefices *et Prælaturas*, [pariſh prieſts are *prælati*: ſee index to Lyndwood in *Prælatus*:] not only vacant, but likely to become ſo, *non precibus & obſequiis tantum, ſed & apertis muneribus*, ſo that *electionum ſaluberrimæ formæ quæ per canones, liberæ eſſe deberent, vel fraudibus obtenebratæ ſunt, vel ad compromiſſi neceſſitatem redactæ*: directs, that biſhops prevent theſe things, and take care by themſelves and their officers, eſpecially *quos in prælatorum electionibus tanquam directores & conſultores*

* The words are, *quod propter præſentationem illam nec promiſerit nec dederit aliquid præſentanti, nec aliquam propter hoc inierit pactionem*: where *hoc* muſt naturally refer to *negotium præſentationis* underſtood.

See Conc. Oxon. C. 18. in Wilkins, vol. 1. p. 588. and Lyndwood, L. 2. de Jurejurando, cap. præſenti, in Wake's Charge, 1709, p. 34, and Stillingfleet on Bonds, &c. p. 721. and Letter about Bonds, p. 39.

† But it appears, by the preamble, that it was deſigned only againſt putting it thus in the patron's power to diſpoſe of the profits, or turn the Incumbents out, and give pluralities of livings to ſuch as he favoured.

‡ Wilkins, vol. 3. p. 216. Wake, p. 35, 36.

‖ The injunctions of Ed. 6. in 1547, appoint, that ſuch as buy benefices, or come to them by fraud or deceit, ſhall be deprived, &c. And ſuch as ſell them, or by any colour beſtow them for their own gain or profit, ſhall loſe their right of preſentment for that time. Wilkins, vol. 4. p. 7, 8.

§ Wilkins, vol. 4. p. 124, 125.

ſultores intereſſe contingat, that *fraudes & pactiones* be excluded: and if any one have got, *per pecuniæ & munerum ſordes, prælaturam vel beneficium eccleſiaſticum*, he be puniſhed *. It is indeed true, that the great evil, at which theſe ſeveral directions were levelled, was giving or promiſing money for preſentations, or receiving it for reſignations †. And therefore it may be argued, that where no money is directly paid, or taken, or covenanted for, nothing illegal is done. But the opinions delivered, and the judgments pronounced, by the Canon Lawyers, plainly extend the prohibition to whatever is equivalent to money ‡. And it hath been urged that by how much ſoever a perſon leſſens the value of a benefice to himſelf by a bond of reſignation to the patron in order to procure it, as unqueſtionably ſuch a bond doth leſſen it, ſo much in effect he pays to obtain it ||. Or allowing, that in ſome caſes this doth not hold: yet nothing will prevent unlawful contracts in many caſes, but prohibiting in all caſes abſolute contracts to reſign upon demand; which therefore the above-mentioned conſtitutions have rightly done. And as the oaths, preſcribed in them, expreſs the denial of having made ſuch a contract; the oath preſcribed at this time muſt naturally be underſtood

* Wilkins, vol. 4. p. 165.

† The tenor of them ſhows this. Particularly the corrupt reſignations were to get penſions out of benefices, or money for quitting them, or exchanges gainful to the patron or his friends. The Ref. Leg. Eccl. Tit. de Renunciatione, cap. 3. forbids only reſignations for conſideration of gain. See Wake, p. 48. And Tit. de admittendis ad Beneficia Eccleſiaſtica, c. 24. only obliges a perſon at inſtitution to ſwear that he neither hath given nor promiſed, nor will give, any thing. And Tit. de Beneficiis Conferendis, forbids only compacts by which benefices are leſſened. See Wake, p. 36. who goes too far in ſaying the words are general againſt all manner of contracts or promiſes. The preamble of the oath in Can. 40. condemns only *buying and ſelling* of benefices. The Latin is *nundinatio*. But Stillingfleet ſaith, p. 719, this takes in any benefit accruing to the patron, becauſe *nomine emptionis & venditionis intelligitur omnis contractus non gratuitus*.

‡ See Wake, p. 18, 24. Stillingfleet, p. 719, 722. and Letter about Bonds, p. 46, &c. The injunctions of Ed. 6. forbid patrons ſelling livings, or by any colour beſtowing them for their own gain and profit. Wilkins, vol. 4. p. 7, 8.

|| Stillingfleet, p. 722.

underſtood to imply the ſame thing. For its being leſs explicit is no proof, that, what in common acceptation came under the name *Simoniacal* before, doth not come under it ſtill.

However, we muſt acknowledge, that bonds of reſignation on demand have been declared by the temporal judges valid, and not ſimoniacal *. And they are indeed the proper judges, whether they are ſuch by the common and ſtatute law. But whether the eccleſiaſtical law permits them, is not ſo clearly within their cognizance. Indeed all queſtions about this crime ſeem to have been entirely out of it †, till an act was made, 31 Eliz. C. 6. which, *for the avoiding of ſimony and corruption in preſentations and collations*, inflicts penalties on thoſe who ſhall either give or procure them for any ſum of money, profit or benefit; or for any promiſe, bond, or aſſurance of it, directly or indirectly: but at the ſame time allows the eccleſiaſtical laws to puniſh the ſame offences which the act doth, in the ſame manner as they did before. Now making theſe proviſions is not ſaying, that nothing ſhall be deemed ſimoniacal by the ſpiritual judge, but what the temporal judge ſhall think

* Stillingfleet, p. 735, *&c.* Wake, p. 49, *&c.* Indeed Stillingfleet, p. 735. ſays that the Court, having given judgment for ſuch a bond in the caſe of Jones and Lawrence, 8 Jac. 1. held, ſeven years after, *viz.* 15 Jac. 1. in the caſe of Paſchal and Clerk, that it was Simony within the ſtatute; and he cites Noy, 22. for it. But Wake mentions not this; and Watſon, c. 5. page 40. ſays it doth not appear by the roll that there was ſuch a trial; and if there was, it is of no great authority, nor hath been regarded ſince.

† See Wake, p. 39, 50. The preamble of 5 Eliz. c. 23. compared with § 13. ſufficiently intimates that Simony is an offence appertaining merely to the juriſdiction and determination of the eccleſiaſtical courts and judges. Yet Stillingfleet, p. 718. cites from Croke, car. 361. the judges as ſaying, in the caſe of Mackaller and Todderick, that the common law before 31 Eliz. took notice of a ſimoniacal contract. But Coke in Cawdrie's caſe, 5th rep. fol. 8, 9. as cited by Wake, p. 50. puts Simony among the crimes the conuſance whereof belongs not to the common but eccleſiaſtical law, and repeats the ſame, p. 40. And Croke, fol. 789. ſays that the judges in the caſe of Baker, 42 Eliz. held that it appertains to the ſpiritual court to determine what is Simony, and not to this court to meddle therewith.

is forbidden by this act *. And therefore, though the latter may apprehend abſolute bonds of reſignation to be conſiſtent with the ſtatute; yet the former may juſtly apprehend them to be inconſiſtent with the conſtitutions of the church, which we ought to obey; and with the oath againſt Simony, which ought to be taken in the ſenſe of thoſe who originally enjoined and ſtill adminiſter it; and not to have its meaning changed on the ſuppoſed authority of their opinions, who neither have undertaken to interpret it, nor, if the judgment of their predeceſſors be allowed, have a right to do it.

At leaſt refuſing ſuch bonds, on account of the oath, muſt be the ſafeſt ſide: eſpecially, as the greateſt divines of this church have declared againſt them; and I think none for them. Though indeed, were the oath out of the queſtion; the bonds are apparently ſo miſchievous, as to be for that reaſon alone ſufficiently unlawful. It may be ſaid, that if the patron attempts to make any ill uſe of them, equity will relieve the incumbent. But I have ſhown you, that their conſequences muſt be very bad, whatever uſe the patron makes of them. And beſides, how expenſive, indeed how uncertain, this pretended relief will be; how ſeldom therefore it will or can be ſought for; and how much better on all accounts it is to avoid the need of it; every one muſt perceive.

But

* Stillingfleet, p. 718. ſaith "the words Simony or Simoniacal contract "are never mentioned in this Statute." And Wake, p. 50. cites Noy rep. fol. 25. as ſaying, that "in it there is no word of Simony; becauſe by "that means the common law would have been judge what ſhould have "been Simony, and what not." And Stillingfleet, ibid. allows, that, if the word had been there, the judges would have had ſufficient reaſon to declare what was Simony and what not. Now in truth that part of the Act which relates to the preſent affair begins thus: "And for the avoiding of Simony "and corruption in preſentations, collations, and donations of and to bene-"fices, &c. and in admiſſions, inſtitutions, and inductions to the ſame, be "it further enacted, that, if any perſon, &c." This may ſeem to imply that no other things but thoſe mentioned afterwards were Simony; otherwiſe the act would provide only for avoiding ſome ſorts of Simony. Accordingly Gibſon Cod. p. 839. and Stillingfleet, pref. p. 714. and diſc. p. 718. think it only means to puniſh ſome particular remarkable ſorts ſpecified in it; and Wake agrees that it abrogates no eccleſiaſtical law. And this agrees with what is obſerved here, note p. 106. But ſtill the judges, after this act, thought that judging of Simony did not belong to them. See here, note p. 107.

But let us now ſuppoſe, that a ſeemingly reaſonable condition were expreſſed in theſe bonds: for inſtance, to reſign when ſuch a relation or friend of the patron's comes to the age of being preſented, who perhaps hath been educated with a view to the benefice vacant *. Now I do not ſay but a perſon may very lawfully, and ſometimes very charitably, form an intention of reſigning at ſuch a period, if circumſtances then ſhould make it proper; and may alſo ſignify ſuch intention beforehand. But if he bind himſelf to it abſolutely, beſides the diſtruſt of him, which requiring this implies, perhaps when the time comes, the young perſon will refuſe to take the benefice, or the patron to give it him; and yet the incumbent muſt continue in perfect dependance thenceforward; for his caſe is become the ſame, as if his bond had been originally without any condition. Beſides, this contrivance for procuring an immediate vacancy at ſuch a particular time, encourages perſons, even of low rank, to purchaſe patronages, ſeparate from the manors on which they were anciently appendant, merely to ſerve intereſted purpoſes. And the generality of theſe, inſtead of conſidering their right of preſentation as a ſpiritual truſt, to be conſcientiouſly diſcharged, will of courſe look on it as a temporal inheritance, which, ſince they have bought, they may fairly ſell, at any time, in any manner, for what they can; or at beſt, merely as the means of providing a maintainance for ſuch perſons as they pleaſe; who therefore, unleſs they will be caſt off intirely by their friends, muſt, when they

* Stillingfleet, p. 716. ſuppoſes this to be the intent, with which an abſolute bond is required; and ſaith, it is a caſe, wherein a bond may be thought far more reaſonable than in others. But he expreſſes no poſitive approbation of it; nor doth he mention there giving a bond with this condition expreſſed. But, in p. 736. he hath that caſe in view, where he ſaith, "that there may be a lawful truſt in ſuch a caſe, I do not queſtion;" yet adds, "but whether the perſon who takes this truſt can enter into a bond "and take the oath, I very much queſtion." And Wake, though in p. 22. he names this as one of the moſt favourable caſes that can be deſired, condemns it notwithſtanding; as an obligation, which the patron has no right to impoſe, nor the clerk any power to enter into; as contrary to the canons, and the authority of the biſhop, and the oath of yielding him canonical obedience, and of doing what in the clerk lies to maintain the rights of his See; but he doth not ſay it is contrary to the oath againſt Simony.

they are of age, however unfit for the cure of ſouls, however averſe from it, ſubmit to be preſented, and perhaps cannot be rejected. Then further, in proportion as this cuſtom prevails, benefices, and particularly the more valuable ones, coming to be of a temporary and precarious tenure, contrary to what they were intended; perſons of character and abilities, and a proper ſpirit, will not ſo often care to take them. Or if they do, they will not uſually, indeed it cannot ſo well be expected they ſhould, either defend the rights of them, or exerciſe hoſpitality and charity upon them, in the ſame manner as if they were to hold them for life. Nor will the people, generally ſpeaking, reſpect thoſe who come in thus, and muſt behave, and go out again thus, as they ought always to reſpect their miniſters.

But ſtill perſons may plead that whatever is objected againſt other engagements from incumbents to patrons, yet if they engage only to be conſtantly reſident, to do faithfully the whole duty, which the laws of the church enjoin them, or perhaps ſomewhat more; this muſt be allowable. And doubtleſs it is, provided the engagement be only a ſincere promiſe of acting thus, as far as they can with reaſonable convenience. Nay, if they bind themſelves by a legal tie, to do any thing, which either belongs of courſe to their benefice, or hath by ancient cuſtom been annexed to it, learned and judicious authors juſtify them *. But covenanting thus to do even a laudable action, as teaching ſchool, or preſcribing to the ſick, if their predeceſſors were not, without a covenant, obliged to it, hath been held unlawful and ſimoniacal †: becauſe it is promiſing to ſave, which upon the matter is promiſing to give, ſo much money either to the patron, or however to thoſe for whom he intereſts himſelf. And indeed, though perſons were to promiſe only what in conſcience they are antecedently bound to; yet if they tie themſelves, either to do this, or to reſign; whenever they fail in any one part of it, as to be ſure they will in ſome, ſooner or later, though perhaps very innocently; ſuppoſing the rigour of their bond inſiſted upon, (as who can ſay it will not?) they are at the mercy of the patron ever after. He becomes their ordinary; and is veſted, by their imprudence,

* Wake's Charge, 1709, p. 24. Stillingfleet's Letter, p. 54.

† Wake, page 18.

imprudence, with a much greater authority, than the biſhop hath: an authority of reſtraining their liberty, where the wiſdom of the church hath not reſtrained it*: an authority of proceeding ſummarily; and depriving them, for whatever failures he hath thought fit to inſert in the bond, without delay and without appeal: and this authority he may exerciſe ever after, when he pleaſes, to juſt the ſame purpoſes, as if they had covenanted at firſt to reſign when requeſted.

Still, without queſtion, many good perſons have both required and given bonds of reſignation of theſe latter ſorts: and in many caſes, as no harm at all hath been intended, ſo no particular harm hath been done by them. But in ſo many more there hath, and it is ſo neceſſary to go by general rules; and one ſpecious exception doth ſo conſtantly produce others that are a little leſs ſo; till at laſt the moſt pernicious practices creep in†, that there is abundant reaſon to refuſe making any contracts whatſoever in order to obtain preſentation: and more eſpecially there is reaſon to refuſe them, on account of their miſchievous influence on the revenues of the church: which was the immediate occaſion of my ſpeaking of them now; though I thought it by no means proper to omit the other arguments againſt them.

Perhaps it may be ſaid: If patrons will have bonds of reſignation, what can clergymen do? I anſwer, if clergymen will not give them, how can patrons help themſelves? They muſt preſent without them, or their right muſt lapſe to the biſhop, who will. It may indeed be replied, that though one perſon rejects the offer, another will accept it: and therefore he may as well. But this would equally be an excuſe for the worſt of wrong compliances in every kind: and conſequently it is an excuſe for none. Beſides, it may happen, that by arguing with patrons againſt ſuch contracts, they may be convinced; and learn ſo juſt an eſteem for thoſe, who refuſe them decently and reſpectfully, as not only to preſent them with double pleaſure, but do them afterwards greater ſervices, than they intended them before. At leaſt whatever clergyman behaves in ſo worthy and exemplary a manner, will aſſuredly, if the reſt of his conduct be ſuitable to that part, either by the

* Wake, p. 25. † Wake, p. 25.

the care of God's providence, be raised in the world some other way; or, by the influence of God's Spirit, be made easy and happy in his present situation.

But it may be objected further, that bishops argue with an ill grace against bonds at presentation, while they themselves take them at institution. And it must be owned, that in several Dioceses, particularly that of Lincoln out of which this was taken, and of Peterborough which was also taken from thence *, there is an ancient and immemorable custom, (customs, you are sensible, not being the same every where;) for the clerk presented to indemnify the bishop and his officers from all suits at law for instituting him. And accordingly in this Diocese, bonds appear to have been taken for that purpose at all institutions for 120 years past: within which time, there have been nearly, if not quite, 700 given, that are now lying in the registry: And hence we may presume the practice hath been the same from the erection of the See. The original of it probably was, that a commission of inquiry being formerly sent out, as old registers prove, upon every vacancy † alledged, to certify the bishop, whether the living was really vacant, who was at present the true patron, and whatever else it was requisite he should know in order to institute: and the expence of this commission, and of the proceedings upon it, being of necessity considerable to the clerk, who bore it ‡; the cheaper method of a bond from him to save the bishop harmless, was substituted in its room. And a further reason might be, that, the bishop having 28 days allowed him, after the presentation was tendered, to consider and inform himself, whether he should institute the clerk presented or not;

* In Lincoln Diocese they are taken only when the Bishop hath any the least suspicion about the patronage; in Peterborough and Litchfield always; in Canterbury whenever a new patron presents; in Gloucester and Exeter they were taken till the time of the present bishops.

† That it was on every vacancy appears from Archbishop Stratford's constitution, Sæva, A. D. 1342. in Lindw. p. 222. and from Lindw. p. 217. on Archbishop Peckham's constitution *per nostram provinciam* verb. *Inquisitionem*, and from Bishop Gibson's Codex, p. 857.

‡ It appears from the above constitution of Stratford, that the clerk paid for the commission, and therefore of course for all that was done upon it.

not; the clerk was willing and deſirous, rather to indemnify the biſhop, if he would conſent to inſtitute him ſooner, than to bear the inconvenience, and perhaps charges, of waiting to the end of that time. At leaſt the only deſign of this bond was and is, that if the clerk's title to inſtitution be queſtionable, the biſhop may not ſuffer by granting it. Now a covenant for this end is ſurely a very lawful one, and ſubject to none of the miſchiefs, which, I have ſhown you, attend bonds to patrons. Nor was any conſtitution of church or ſtate ever pointed againſt it: nor I believe hath any harm ever happened from it.

But I muſt own too, that there is another condition added to theſe bonds, that the clerk ſhall reſign his benefice if required by the biſhop, in caſe any controverſy ariſe, whether his inſtitution be rightful. But this proviſion is, in the bond, expreſſed to be made only for the ſame purpoſe with the former, the indemnification of the biſhop: and the penalty of the bond is ſo moderated, as to ſerve that purpoſe and no other. Accordingly, I have not heard that any one perſon hath ever ſcrupled, in point of conſcience, to enter into this engagement; the meaning of it being only, that if he prove to have no right, he ſhall quit: nor indeed, that any one hath found cauſe to ſcruple it in point of prudence. For as you may be ſure the fulfilling it would never be required without neceſſity; ſo I believe it hath never yet been required at all. That neither the intention of this covenant was bad, nor the reaſons for it contemptible, you will readily allow, on being told, that it began to be inſerted conſtantly in this Dioceſe, at the time when our preſent moſt reverend Metropolitan was placed over it: which ſeeming innovation was indeed only conforming more exactly to the old example of our Mother See *. But ſtill as it is a condition, the inſiſting on which, in ſome caſes, might have bad effects, that were not then foreſeen †;

* I have ſeen a bond from the Biſhop of Lincoln's regiſtry with this covenant in it, printed in the time of Jac. 2. and the Biſhop informs me the covenant hath been uſed ever ſince the Reſtoration; how much ſooner he knows not.

† *e. g.* A ſuit may be begun which would have proved ineffectual. Yet if the Incumbent reſign, the expence of a freſh preſentation and inſtitution will at leaſt be neceſſary for him; but indeed the patron may preſent another; and in the caſe of alternate patronage, another will preſent.

though in such cases it probably never would be insisted on, as it never hath: I have determined, with his grace's intire approbation, to omit it for the future.

And, in every thing, I shall not only be careful to make your burthens no heavier, but if it can be shown me, that I am able to do it, with justice and equity, I shall be glad to make them lighter. The fees taken of the clergy in this Diocese, whether at institutions or visitations, are not varied in any one article from those, which were returned to, and not disapproved by, a committee of parliament in the time of my predecessor. They are the same, as he informs me, with those taken in the time of his predecessor. Nor have I hitherto found proof, though I have inquired with some care, that they have been increased at all materially since the bishopric was founded *. Those of visitation I am sure have not in the least. And yet the diminution of the value of money in that interval hath reduced the same sum in name and quantity, to perhaps not a fourth of what it was in effect and use, on which account proportionable augmentations of fees have been made, I believe, in all temporal courts and offices; and ancient rules to the contrary have been justly deemed obsolete, the reasons of them having ceased. So that where this hath not been done, or not to any considerable degree, there is cause to render to all their dues with great satisfaction.

And here I must take the freedom of speaking to you about some dues owing to myself, Synodals and Procurations. The former are an ancient acknowledgement of honour and subjection, reserved by the Bishops of the Western Church, as long ago as when they settled their own share of the tithes, in each parish, to be the future property of the several incumbents: And it took its name from being usually paid at the Synodal meetings. Now, so small a tribute, especially if considered as a quit rent for so great a concession, can surely never be thought a hardship. The other, procurations, are also a payment several hundred years old, succeeding in the place of a much more expensive obligation, that of entertaining the bishop and his attendants, when he visited each parish. Neither of them hath been increased since their first beginning;

* *i. e.* Allowing each of the new instruments that are required, to cost as much as each of the old ones.

ing; the right to both is indiſputably legal; and, as I am ſworn to maintain all the rights of my See, I promiſe myſelf none of you will force me to do it in a way, that cannot be more diſagreeable to you, than it will to me. If any one pleads, that complying with the demand of ſo trifling a ſum will be inconvenient to him, it ſhall be more than returned him. If any one doubts, whether it is incumbent on him or not: his reaſons for the doubt, whenever he lays them before me, ſhall be impartially conſidered, and allowed their full weight. But I hope no perſon will think it either decent or juſt, merely to refuſe, without aſſigning a ſufficient cauſe: and diſuſe for ſome years is not ſufficient, in a matter, like this, of common right. Moſt of my clergy have very punctually ſhown me this little mark of their regard, amongſt many greater. Whether any here preſent have omitted it, I do not know. But I truſt you will all have the candor to think I have mentioned it, not from any wrong or mean motive, but becauſe I apprehend it my duty, and have not the leaſt doubt of your willingneſs to be informed or reminded of every part of yours.

And with this kind of digreſſion I muſt conclude for the preſent. If God prolong my life and health to another opportunity, I ſhall proceed to the remainder of the ſubject. In the mean time, I heartily pray him to direct and bleſs you in all things.

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE

OF

OXFORD.

In the Year 1750.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

IN the courſe of my former viſitations of this Diocese, I have recommended to you various parts of your duty, as miniſters of the goſpel in general, and of your reſpective pariſhes in particular. After things, more immediately and intirely of ſpiritual concern, I proceeded, in my laſt charge, to the care that you are bound to take of your temporalities; with which you are intruſted, partly for the ſervice of religion in your own times, partly for your ſucceſſors, as your predeceſſors were for you: a truſt, which if any of them broke, or neglected, you are too ſenſible they did ill, to be excuſable to your own minds, if you imitate them. And dividing this care into the behaviour, that is requiſite at your coming into livings, during your incumbency on them, and when you are to quit them: I went through the firſt of theſe heads; giving you proper cautions, more eſpecially againſt making any contract or promiſe inconſiſtent with the oath then required of

you,

you, or prejudicial to your own benefices, or the common intereſts of the clergy. Therefore I now go on to the ſecond, the vigilance with which you ought each to ſuperintend the revenues and poſſeſſions of your church, whilſt you continue miniſter of it.

I have too much cauſe, in every thing, to be ſenſible of my own unfitneſs to direct; but, in ſeveral articles, relating to this point, I am peculiarly unqualified; having little experience in them, and a yet leſs ſhare of the proper abilities and turn of mind for them. However, I ought not to omit being of ſuch uſe to you, as I can. There may be thoſe amongſt you, who are either ſtill more unacquainted with theſe matters, or at leaſt have not conſidered them all in the ſame light; as you muſt have obſerved, that very obvious inſtances, both of wiſdom and duty, eſcape the attention of many, till they are pointed out to them. And a diſcourſe, neither complete, nor poſſibly free from miſtakes, may notwithſtanding do ſervice, by exciting perſons to think on the ſubject, more than they have done hitherto.

Your care, in reſpect to this ſubject, conſiſts of two parts; recovering what may be unduly with-held from your church, and preſerving what is left.

It is very unhappy, that ſo troubleſome and invidious an employment, as the former, ſhould ever be made neceſſary; which yet it hath too often been. Glebe lands have been blended with temporal eſtates; and pretences ſet up, that only ſuch a yearly rent, far inferior to the real value, is payable from them. Tithes and other dues have been denied; under falſe colours of exemptions in ſome caſes, and of Modus's in many. Every unjuſt plea admitted makes way for more. And thus what was given for the ſupport of the clergy in all future times, is decreaſing continually; and becoming leſs ſufficient, as it goes down to them. The laity themſelves, if they would reflect, muſt ſee, that they have by no means any cauſe to rejoice in this. For, probably few of them in proportion will be gainers by what we loſe; but the whole body of them, wherever the proviſion made for us becomes incompetent, muſt either make another at their own expence, or be deprived in a great meaſure of the good influences of our office, with reſpect to this world and the next. But whatever they are, we ourſelves cannot ſurely fail to be deeply concerned

concerned at the ill aspect, which these encroachments bear towards religion in ages to come. Whoever is indifferent about it, shews himself very unworthy of what he enjoys from the liberality of ages preceding. And whoever is grieved at it, will set himself to consider, not how he can augment the patrimony of the church, where it is already plentiful; or any where, by dishonourable methods; (you are very sensible, what injustice and folly there would be in such attempts) but how he can retrieve any part of it, which is illegally or unequitably seized and detained.

Now here the foundation of all must be, a diligent and impartial inquiry into the right of the case; for it would be absurd to deceive ourselves; and unfair to demand of others what we are not well persuaded is our due. Therefore to avoid both, we should ask the opinion of skilful and upright advisers. If this be in our favour, the next proper steps will be, laying our claim, with the proofs of it, so far as prudence will permit, before the person concerned; representing it, in a friendly and serious manner, as an affair, in which his conscience is interested; procuring the assistance of those, who have weight with him, if we know any such; taking the opportunity of his being, at any time, in a more considerate disposition than ordinary; pressing him, not to rely too much on his own judgment, where it may so easily be biassed: yet forbidding him to rely on ours, if he would; and begging him to consult some other worthy and able person: offering to pitch on one or more, if circumstances persuade to it, whose determination shall conclude us both: and intreating him to say, whether he would not think this, in any other case, very reasonable. If still he cannot prevail on himself to comply: we may endeavour to lessen the difficulty, by proposing to accept a small payment, where none hath been made of some time; or a small variation, where a customary payment is pleaded: in hopes, that either the desire of enjoying, with some degree of good conscience, the main of what he withholds now with a bad one; or, at least, that of avoiding the cost and hazard of a contest, may win him over.

If none of these methods (which too commonly happens) will operate, after a due season allowed them for it; the only remaining remedy is an appeal to the law. But here I would be far from exciting any of you to plainly fruitless or over-

dangerous

dangerous attempts. I am very ſenſible, how unfavourable the times are to eccleſiaſtical pretenſions, how enormous the expences of legal proceedings, how ſmall the incomes of moſt benefices, how ſtrait the circumſtances of moſt clergymen: conſiderations, that, one ſhould think, would reſtrain perſons of any generoſity, nay of any compaſſion, from bearing hard upon them. But they ought not to be pleaded by any of us, to excuſe ourſelves from undertaking a neceſſary burthen; which perhaps we are as well able to ſupport, as any who will be likely to come in our ſtead. I am ſenſible too, and would have you be ſo, that ſcarce any thing is a more effectual hinderance to our doing good amongſt our pariſhioners, than the character of being litigious; which many delight to give us: but with how little juſtice, in general, one ſingle obſervation, amongſt ſeveral that might be alledged, will more than ſufficiently ſhow; that of ſeven hundred ſuits for tithes, brought by the clergy into the Court of Exchequer, which is only about one in 14 pariſhes, during the ſpace of 53 years, from the reſtoration to the year 1713, 600 were decided for them. It is true, our obtaining juſtice againſt any man, though in ever ſo clear a cauſe, is very apt to be reſented, by himſelf and his friends at leaſt, as grievous injuſtice. But uſing the previous amicable pleaſures, which I have recommended, muſt in ſome degree prevent, either ſevere imputations upon us, or however the belief of them: and if not entirely, yet, by mildneſs, and prudence, we may certainly regain in time the reputation we never deſerved to loſe. At leaſt our ſucceſſors will enjoy, free from all blame, what we recover to them: whereas, if we acquieſce in the detention of our due, they will ſtill be more likely to do ſo, and thus the loſs of it will be perpetuated. Therefore in caſes both ſufficiently plain, and of ſufficient importance, when all other ways have been tried to no purpoſe, and the right will be either extinguiſhed, or much obſcured, by delay; and perhaps the example ſpread further: I ſee not how we can excuſe ourſelves from applying to a proper court of juſtice, if we can hope to procure a ſentence from it, without abſolute ruin or extreme diſtreſs. For it is a mean and wicked ſelfiſhneſs, to hoard up wealth, conſult our eaſe, or court the favour of our ſuperiors, by letting the inheritance of the

church

church be impoveriſhed, while the guardianſhip of it is in our hands.

But then we muſt be doubly careful of what all men ſhould be abundantly more careful of, than moſt are, that we never awe perſons, eſpecially poor perſons, unjuſtly, by threatening them with law, into a compliance with our demands; and that no diſpute of this kind ever entice us to do any thing fraudulent, or provoke us to do any thing ill-natured or vexatious. And particularly, if we have a demand on any of the people called Quakers, we ſhould, if we poſſibly can, purſue it by that method only, which the act, for the more eaſy recovery of ſmall tithes, hath provided: and rather ſit down with a moderate loſs, than do otherwiſe. For they are a generation loud in their complaints, unfair in their repreſentations, and peculiarly bitter in their reflections, where we are concerned: unwearied in labouring to render us odious, and ſurpriſingly artful in recommending themſelves to the great.

But I proceed to the leſs troubleſome and diſagreeable duty of preſerving what we ſtill poſſeſs. Now to this end the moſt obvious way is, keeping the glebe in our own hands, and taking the tithes and all other dues ourſelves: for which reaſon probably, amongſt others, both ancient eccleſiaſtical conſtitutions, and later acts of parliament, have reſtrained and limited leaſing of benefices. But many are ſo little qualified for this, and would be ſo great loſers by it: and others would find it ſuch a hinderance to the diſcharge of their miniſterial office, or the purſuit of uſeful ſtudies: nay, where it hath been long diſuſed, the people might perhaps be ſo much offended with the novelty: that I would by no means preſs doing it in all caſes, but only recommend it in proper ones. And where it is done, if a clergyman were to attend to ſuch matters too cloſely; and, above all, were to be over-watchful and ſtrict about ſmall demands: it would naturally raiſe a contempt, if not hatred of him. And therefore it will be much better to content ourſelves with giving pariſhioners, by prudent inſtruction, a general ſenſe of their obligation to pay their dues; and by engaging behaviour, a general diſpoſition to it; than to exact the minuter ſorts of them with an indecent eagerneſs. But ſtill, where rights, that may ſeem inconſiderable in each particular caſe, amount to more on the whole,

whole, than it is convenient to lose; and yet will be withheld, if not insisted on: we must do it, with as good a grace as we can; and remind persons, if there be need, that such as make this necessary, are indeed they, who act the mean part; that it is no fault of ours to require what the law hath allotted us for our maintenance; but a great misfortune, that so much of it consists in these petty articles.

Whatever tithes it will be incommodious to keep in our own hands, we may compound for with those who should pay them, or lease them to others. The former way will usually be kinder and more obliging, and so far more eligible. Yet, on the other hand, if we chuse the latter, our lessee will probably find it his interest to take them in kind, which will preserve our title to them in kind: and therefore, it may at least be expedient sometimes, in relation to any questionable parts of them. But if a tenant will rather give up some of our rights, than be at the trouble of asserting them, we may be under a necessity of doing it ourselves. And if we let any of our tithes to the proprietor of what they rise from, or to whomsoever we let our glebe, it should never be for too long a time at the same rent: else we run a great risque of being told, that we are intitled to nothing more. The person indeed, who makes the agreement with us, cannot think so; and yet what even he may pretend to our successors, we cannot foresee. But the parson that comes after him, may insist on it even to us; and though the evil should be delayed longer, it will happen much too soon. Written agreements, distinctly worded, may be an useful and effectual preventive. Yet these, in course of time, may be lost by various accidents: or constancy of the same unvaried payment be alledged as a stronger argument on one side, than they are on the other. And if either should prove our case, contending at law with any Parishioner will be a very undesirable thing; and contending with a powerful one may be an impracticable thing. Therefore we ought never to begin customs, that may be dangerous; and if they are begun, even by our predecessors fault, and yet more if by our own, we should think how to stop them without delay. But the least we can do, is resolutely to refuse, authorizing such invasions, by giving any thing under our hands, which may but seem an acknowledgement that what we receive is a prescript and unchangeable

payment, unleſs we are very well aſſured that the law will eſteem it ſuch. We ought rather to loſe it ourſelves, than procure it by an act, that will prejudiſe our ſucceſſors. Barely continuing to accept it unaltered, is doing more than enough to their diſadvantage; therefore we ought on no account to go further; but, on the contrary, labour to procure and perpetuate, if we can, ſuch evidence as may be of ſervice to them.

Nor ſhould we be careful only to preſerve our benefices from any diminution of income, but alſo from any addition of expence, which would amount to the ſame thing: For heavy burthens, and very unfit ones, of riotous entertainments in particular, and thoſe ſometimes at the moſt improper ſeaſons, have been introduced and eſtabliſhed, in many places, by the inconſiderateneſs and ſupineneſs of incumbents. We ſhall do well, abſolutely to break and annihilate ſuch cuſtoms, if it remains legally poſſible; and if not to uſe our utmoſt influence towards procuring the conſent of the perſons concerned, to change them into ſomething elſe, leſs exceptionable, and more uſeful, to be ſecured to them as firmly as may be; with a covenant added, that they ſhall be intitled to return to their old uſage, if ever they are denied the benefit of the new.

Provided the above-mentioned precautions be obſerved, we are much at liberty to treat our pariſhioners as kindly as we will; and very kindly we ought to treat them; never permitting them, if we know it, to go without any thing, which is their right; to pay any thing, which is not due; or even to take any thing too dear: always making them equitable abatements, admitting every tolerable excuſe for their delays of payment; and rather chuſing to loſe ever ſo much by them, than with any ſhadow of juſtice be accuſed of cruelty towards them. Yet, when we ſhow them any indulgence, we ſhould let them ſee, we are ſenſible of what we do for them: elſe they may impute it to our ignorance, not our goodneſs. And we ought not to be ſo eaſy with them, as to ſet them againſt a ſucceſſor, who cannot afford to imitate us; or diſqualify ourſelves, by a promiſcuous kindneſs to all, from being eſpecially kind to ſuch as want. But whatever improvements we make in our benefices, by whatever juſt means, it will be a prudent guard againſt envy, as well as a right behaviour on

other

other accounts, to increaſe, at the ſame time, either a ſober modeſt hoſpitality, for neither exceſs nor vain ſhow at all become our function; or, which is yet better, and ought never to be excluded by the other, a judicious charity; above all, to the induſtrious and virtuous poor, extended to their ſouls, as well as their bodies.

For the purpoſe of recovering or preſerving the rights of vicarages, the original endowments of them may be very uſeful. And theſe you are to ſeek for in the regiſter books of the Dioceſe of Lincoln, out of which this was taken. But I have collected copies of ſome; and can direct you to books, printed or manuſcript, in which are copies of others; or to that part of the regiſter-books, in which they may be found: and ſhall gladly give any of you whatever information is in my power. But you muſt not always conclude your preſent rights to be neither more nor leſs, than ſuch an endowment ſets forth; both becauſe there may be a ſubſequent one, with variations; and becauſe, where no ſubſequent one appears, long cuſtom, in particular caſes, may create a legal preſumption, that there was one, upon which that cuſtom was grounded.

For the ſame uſe, in Rectories, as well as Vicarages, Terriers were directed: how anciently I cannot ſay. But the 87th canon of 1603 enjoins, that the Biſhop of each Dioceſe ſhall procure them to be taken, by the view of honeſt men in every pariſh, to be appointed by him, whereof the miniſter to be one: it ſpecifies the particulars, of which they ſhall conſiſt, and orders them to be laid up in the Biſhop's regiſtry. How often they ſhall be taken, it doth not mention. But plainly the changes, which time introduces, particularly in the names of the parcels and abuttals of glebe lands, require a renewal of terriers at reaſonable diſtances. This canon hath been obſerved ſo imperfectly, that of about 200 pariſhes, of which this Dioceſe conſiſts, there are terriers in the regiſtry of no more than about 126; and of moſt of them only one; and of theſe, not 20, ſince the year 1685. In the convocation of 1704, complaints were made of the like omiſſions elſewhere; and in thoſe of 1710, 1714, 1715, a ſcheme was formed, that where no terrier had been made for 7 years then laſt paſt, (which looks as if a repetition every 7 years was

intended *) the Miniſter ſhould make one, with the Church-wardens, or ſuch pariſhioners as the Biſhop ſhould appoint; that three indented copies of it in parchment ſhould be ſigned by them; one to be exhibited at the Biſhop's next viſitation, the ſecond at the Archdeacon's, and the third put in the pariſh cheſt †. But theſe propoſals having never received the ſanction of due authority, are to be conſidered as no more than prudent directions; the canon of 1603 ſtill continues our only legal rule. And I am very deſirous to perform the part which it aſſigns to me. But then I muſt beg your aſſiſtance in order to my nominating proper perſons; that is, pariſhioners of the greateſt probity, knowledge, and ſubſtance, to be joined in the work with you. Terriers indeed are of more uſe in cauſes tried before eccleſiaſtical judges, than temporal: who will not allow the ſpiritual judicatures to be courts of record; but ſtill, when regularly made, they will have ſome weight every where. At leaſt they will be valuable and authentic informations to your ſucceſſors; and probably the pariſhioners of future times will be aſhamed to inſiſt on claims, contrary to what they will ſee inſerted under the hands of their predeceſſors, perhaps their fathers or near relations. But then, to produce theſe good effects, indeed to prevent their producing bad ones, they muſt be made with great care. If there be a preceding terrier, it muſt be conſulted: if it be defective, the defects muſt be ſupplied: if it be accurate, there muſt be no variations from it in the new, but where they are neceſſary to render deſcriptions intelligible; or where other alterations that have been made require them. For contradictory terriers will hurt, if not deſtroy, each other's evidence. It will alſo be right to expreſs in them, what peculiar burthens are incumbent on the miniſter, or that there are none, as well as what property belongs to him. But if his right, or obligation, to any thing, be doubtful; either no terrier muſt be made, till the doubt is removed; or it muſt be ſet down there as

* Prideaux, Directions to Church-wardens, § 99. ſaith, That the Biſhop, at every viſitation uſually requires a new Terrier. Biſhop Gibſon propoſes that there ſhould be a new one where there had been none ſince the Reſtoration.

† See Wilkins, vol. 4. p. 638, 656. It was alſo propoſed that a Kalendar ſhould be made of thoſe which were put in the regiſtry, and that they ſhould not be delivered out, without ſecurity given.]

as a doubtful point; but by no means given up, to pleaſe any perſon, or ſerve any purpoſe whatever. For terriers, that make againſt the clergy, will do them abundantly more harm, than ſuch, as make in their favour, will do them good. And laſtly, though it may be needleſs and inconvenient to employ many perſons in drawing up a terrier, yet the more ſign it, the better; eſpecially of conſiderable perſons: for to omit any of them, and multiply the names of others, will appear ſuſpicious. And as it may not always be eaſy to procure ſuch hands, as you could wiſh; favourable opportunities muſt be prudently ſought and waited for; and the work undertaken when they offer, and not before.

Other very uſeful precautions, of near affinity to this of terriers, are, that if any augmentations have been made of your benefices, by payments reſerved in church or college leaſes, by the queen's bounty, or otherwiſe: or if any agreements have been entered into, between you, or your predeceſſors, and the patron and ordinary, for making any exchange or incloſures, or doing any other act, which affects your income, or any part of it, whether it be confirmed by a legal decree or not: proper evidences of theſe things ſhould both be kept amongſt your parochial papers, and depoſited in the public office. Indeed, the law requires that augmentations, made by eccleſiaſtical bodies or perſons, be entered in a parchment book, to be kept in the Biſhop's regiſtry for that end *. And though acts of parliament, paſſed for any of the above mentioned, may be conſidered as things more notorious; yet, without the ſame ſort of care, the memory of theſe alſo may be loſt, or ſome of the proviſions made in them controverted.

There is ſtill one thing more, that, amongſt ſeveral other uſes to which it extends, may be very ſerviceable to aſcertain the rights of livings: I mean repeating, from time to time, the ancient practice of perambulations; which hath been long freed from ſuperſtition; and, if preſerved alſo from intemperance and tumultuous conteſts, the laſt of which evils may be prevented by friendly diſcourſe before-hand with the chief inhabitants of your own and the neighbouring pariſhes; the thankſgivings, prayers, and ſentences of ſcripture, with which, the

* 29 Car. 2. c. 8. § 4, 5, 6.

the injunctions of Queen Elizabeth direct it to be accompanied, will render it a very pious ceremony; and the civil benefits of it may be conſiderable. For though, without it, there ſeldom will ariſe any queſtion, to what pariſh, lands, that have been long cultivated, appertain: yet concerning others, in the whole or in part, there often doth. And ſome, that are worth but little at preſent, may come hereafter to be of great value.

But, beſides preſerving the incomes of our benefices from encroachments, we are bound to preſerve the lands and edifices, belonging to them in good condition. If therefore we commit waſte on our glebe, or, through covetouſneſs or negligence, impoveriſh it, or ſuffer our tenant to impoveriſh it, we act diſhonourably and unjuſtly: as alſo, if we permit our dwelling-houſes or out-buildings to fall into decay, for want of early or ſufficient repair. A ſmall expence in time may prevent the neceſſity of a much larger afterwards, and thus, by neglecting it, we may hurt ourſelves; which would doubtleſs be unwiſe: but deſignedly throwing the burthen on our ſucceſſor deſerves a harſher name. And if we either ſquander extravagantly, or hoard avaritiouſly, what we ſave thus; it doubles the fault. If mere indolence be the cauſe of our omiſſion; it is by no means a good principle; and produces effects, as bad, as if it were a worſe. Nay, if we are influenced by the deſire of making only a reaſonable proviſion for our families: we have no right to provide for them by wronging our ſucceſſor; and perhaps depriving our pariſhioners of the benefit of having a miniſter reſident amongſt them. Poſſibly ſome may ſay, that their executors muſt account for whatever they leave out of order; and therefore they do no harm. But, it may be, they will leave them nothing to account with: eſpecially, as the common law prefers the payment of other debts before dilapidations *. At leaſt they well know, that the law, though it will allow more than executors commonly pretend: and perhaps more, than would have prevented the damage, if applied in time; will not allow enough to repair it afterwards; or however, not to compenſate moreover for the expence and trouble of taking that remedy; and that therefore, in all likelihood, a ſucceſſor, to avoid law, will

* See Gibſon's Codex, p. 791.

will chuſe rather to accept of leſs, than he ought to have. Now, driving him to this is doing him a groſs injury; and that very probably when he is juſt coming into the world in ſuch circumſtances, that it will weigh heavy upon him, and may put him behind hand for a long time. Some again will plead, that they really cannot afford to repair their houſes. And doubtleſs the condition of many is very pitiable, and deſerves the aſſiſtance, as well as compaſſion, of their richer neighbours and brethren. But ſtill, what reaſon is there to think, that they, who come after them, will be better able, when the houſes are grown worſe? And what muſt it therefore end in, unleſs timely prevention be applied? Others may alledge, theirs are in repair; and no dilapidations will be found, when they leave them. But are they in ſuch repair, ſo ſubſtantial and ſo decent, as a miniſter's houſe ought, that belongs to ſuch a benefice; or only juſt habitable, and patched up to hold out a little longer? Perhaps you keep your houſe in as good a condition, as you found it. But did you think your predeceſſor acted well, when he left it you in no better? If not, that which was his duty is now yours. Theſe things all incumbents ought to conſider; but ſome more eſpecially; as they who have large benefices, and they who have two; which may be ordinarily ſuppoſed equivalent to a large one. Yet theſe latter, in how good order ſoever they may, for their own ſakes, keep the houſe they uſually reſide in, have too often left the other to be treated as a farmer or tenant pleaſes; till it hath grown, if not ruinous, yet very unſuitable to its next proper inhabitant. Again, rich perſons, that are poſſeſſed of poor livings, ought peculiarly to reflect, how noble an opportunity is put into their hands of being benefactors to them; by repairing, or, if need be, rebuilding, and fitting up, the houſes; and improving whatever little ſpace of ground lies about them, in ſuch manner, as will make both comfortable to the ſucceeding owners. And the very different method, which they have ſometimes taken, of living in better habitations themſelves, and letting theſe run into decay, is extremely ungenerous and illiberal. Yet indeed, on the other hand, making parſonage or vicarage houſes, or the appurtenances of them, ſo large for their own convenience, as to bring on afterwards too great an expence in ſupporting them,

them, would be a mark, either of much vanity, or little consideration.

On this whole subject I must, instead of persuasion, use authority alone. But as the latter would be much less pleasing to me; so I hope the former will be as effectual with you. Else, the laws of the church in this nation, empower the Bishop, if incumbents do not repair their houses in a decent manner *, to take cognizance of the neglect either on complaint or by voluntary inquiry, and to proceed against them by ecclesiastical censures; or, after admonishing them in vain, to make himself what repair is needful out of the profits of their benefices; and what proportion of them shall be applied to this purpose, is left to his discretion †; but the injunctions of H. 8. Ed. 6. and Q. Eliz. directed a fifth ‡. And a further constitution of Othobon, published in the year 1268, expressly orders, that such a sequestration be made in the case of houses fallen down, as well as decayed ||. And the Ref. Leg. Eccl. had provided in the same manner for the same thing §, in conformity with evident reason. Indeed, where no house hath been for a long time, compelling the incumbent to rebuild one may seem hard. But is it not harder still, that his parishioners and successors should never more enjoy an advantage, intended to be a perpetual one? At least, whatever he may think of his legal obligation, he should consider, whether he is not in conscience obliged to devote some fitting share of his income to this use. Surely, if he doth not think it a strict duty, he must think it, unless there be some peculiar reason to the contrary, an excellently good action. And supposing that

* Semper tamen rationabilis consideratio sit habenda ad facultates ecclesiæ. Const. Edm. Si. Rector; on which Lyndwood's note is, Quia in beneficio pinguiori requiruntur ædificia magis sumptuosa quam in beneficio minus pingui. Lib. 3. Tit. 27. de Eccl. ædificandis. Verb. Facultates Ecclesiæ, p. 251.

† See Gibson's Codex, t. 32. c. 3. p. 789, &c.

‡ See Wilkins, vol. 4. p. 5. The Ref. Leg. Eccl. Tit. de Dilapidationibus, c. 2. p. 77. directs only a 7th.

|| Gibson's Codex, Tit. 32. c. 3. p. 789.

§ Tit. de Dilap. c. 2. p. 77.

that what he can lay by, will amount only to a tolerable beginning; yet others may, and probably will, ſooner or later, add to it, and complete the work.

But whatever care you ought to take, and I ought to ſee that you take, in relation to your houſes; there is ſtill a much greater, for the ſame reaſons and more, due from you, who are rectors, in relation to your chancels; and I am yet more expreſsly authorized, by ſtatute-law as well as canon, to ſuperintend this matter. Chancels are the moſt ſacred part of the church: and the whole church ought to be preſerved in a condition, worthy of that Being, whoſe it is; and fit to inſpire his worſhippers with reverence. The light of nature taught the Heathens to adorn their temples *. God himſelf provided, by expreſs and minute directions, for the beauty of his ſanctuary amongſt the Jews: the ancient Chriſtians imitated theſe precedents, as ſoon as ever the danger of perſecution ceaſed †: and if the following ages carried their notions of magnificence and ornament in religious edifices too far, as undoubtedly they did, in heaping up treaſures there, which had much better have been diſtributed to the poor, than kept to provoke the envy and avarice of the great: yet in this country, for ſeveral generations paſt, the contrary extreme hath prevailed to ſo ſhameful a degree, as muſt needs give Papiſts an exceeding great diſguſt to proteſtantiſm; and infidels no ſmall contempt of Chriſtians, as either deſpiſing inwardly the religion they profeſs, or being too ſordid to pay it the common outward marks of reſpect.

Now, what hope can we have of bringing our people back, unleſs we ſet them the example? What can we ſay to our pariſhioners about their churches, or to lay-impropriators about their chancels; or, ſay what we will, how can it be expected they ſhould mind us, if we are blameable ourſelves on the ſame head? In reſpect of their duty in this point, and ſome concern, (indeed not a little) which you have with it, I intend to ſpeak at large, if God ſpare my life and health to another viſitation. But at preſent I confine myſelf to what is more immediately and intirely the province of the clergy. Anciently the repair of the whole church was incumbent on

* Hor. Od. 15. lib. 2. and Sat. 2. lib. 2. v. 103, 104, 105.

† See Bingham.

the Rector, as of common right*. I believe it continues to be ſo ſtill in other nations: but the cuſtom of ours hath releaſed us from the largeſt part of the burthen: for which reaſon we ought to bear the remainder very chearfully; and exceed what in ſtrictneſs might be demanded of us. Plainneſs of appearance, though carried almoſt to the borders of neglect, in relation to our own perſons and abodes, may be a judicious and inſtructive mark of ſimplicity and humility. But it will be much more ſo, if, at the ſame time, we are liberal in providing for the honour of ſacred things. And if, inſtead of that, we take juſt the contrary part; dwell, as the Prophet expreſſes himſelf, *in ceiled houſes, and let the houſe of God lie waſte*†; ſuffer the principal part of it, and that with which we are intruſted, to be in a worſe condition, than any common room we live in; think nothing too good for ourſelves, and every thing good enough for him and his ſervice; it is an exceeding bad ſign; and muſt have a moſt undeſirable effect on all who obſerve it. I believe indeed that the chancels, which belong to incumbents, will be generally found in the beſt condition of any. Yet ſome even of theſe, I fear, have ſcarce been kept in neceſſary preſent repair, and others by no means duly cleared from annoyances, which muſt gradually bring them to decay; water undermining and rotting the foundations, earth heaped up againſt the outſide, weeds and ſhrubs growing upon them, or trees too near them. Where ſufficient attention is paid to theſe things; too frequently the floors are meanly paved, or the walls dirty or patched, or the windows ill glazed, and it may be in part ſtopt up, or the roof not ceiled; or they are damp, offenſive and unwholeſome, for want of a due circulation of air. Now it is indiſpenſably requiſite to preſerve them not only ſtanding and ſafe, but clean, neat, decent, agreeable; and it is highly fit to go further, and ſuperadd, not a light and trivial finery, but ſuch degrees of proper dignity and grandeur, as we are able, conſiſtently with other real obligations. Perhaps they may have been long, or perhaps always, as mean as they are at preſent. But the meanneſs which in ages of leſs elegance might give no offence, may juſtly give more than a little now. And why ſhould not the

* See Conſt. Othob. Tit. 17. and John de Athon, verb. Cancellos.

† Hag. i. 4.

the church of God, as well as every thing elſe about us, partake of the improvements of later times? In ſeveral of your chancels, I doubt not, every thing which I have been recommending is done. In others you have reſolved to do it: and if any have not rightly conſidered the matter before, they muſt be ſenſible, that it was my duty to admoniſh them, and is theirs to regard the admonition. For, as to the excuſes, which may be pleaded under this head of Chancels, they have been obviated, under the former of parſonage-houſes.

It only remains now, that I ſpeak briefly to the third point, our obligations in regard to the temporalities of our benefices, when we have a near view of quitting them; whether by death, which may be near us at any time, and muſt be ſo in old age; or any other way. Some, becauſe they were not to continue incumbents long, have ſet themſelves to conſult their own intereſts, by neglect of all expenſive duties, by committing waſte, by allowing others to commit it. A manner of proceeding, in all caſes unjuſt; when they are removing to a better income, peculiarly diſhonourable; when they ſee their latter end approach, ſhockingly wicked; unleſs the decay of their faculties furniſh ſome excuſe for them. Rejecting therefore all ſuch practices with juſt abomination, we are bound in theſe circumſtances, to conſider ſeriouſly, what our paſt faults and omiſſions, relating to this article, have been; to undo, as far as we can, what we have done amiſs; to do immediately what we ought to have done ſooner; to make the amends we are able, if any harm hath happened by the delay; and, indeed, ſome amends for the chance there was, that harm might have happened. But, how rightly ſoever we may have acted hitherto, there will ſtill be duties, peculiar to the time, which I am now ſuppoſing; that we ſecure to our ſucceſſors whatever books, deeds, and papers, relating to our benefices, came down to us from our predeceſſors; whatever evidences our own incumbency hath furniſhed; in a word, whatever notices may be of importance, concerning the rights, or the value, of the living, we enjoy. But particularly, if we have been ſo inconſiderate, as to make any long agreement, which a ſucceeding miniſter may be in danger of miſtaking, or others may be tempted to ſet up, for an eſtabliſhed preſcription; as may eaſily happen, if it was done many years ago; we ought

to leave them the moſt authentic proofs of the real ſtate and truth of the caſe. Some have through indolence omitted theſe things. Others have deſignedly kept in their own power, or left in that of their executors, all ſuch means of information; that their ſucceſſors, in order to receive them, may be bound to behave reaſonably and kindly, as they are pleaſed to term it; that is, may be under a neceſſity of ſubmitting to whatever unreaſonable things ſhall be demanded of them; in reſpect of dilapidations, or any other point. This, you cannot but ſee, would be making an unfaithful uſe of thoſe lights, which have been intruſted with you by others, and an oppreſſive one of thoſe which you have added yourſelves. Or ſuppoſing that only equitable requeſts are made to a ſucceſſor, and that he refuſes them: ſtill it is not a Chriſtian part, to prevent this injury by threatening, and much leſs to revenge it by doing, what in all likelihood would be a far greater injury; and may extend its bad effects, beyond the perſon, who hath given the provocation, to all that ſhall fill his place hereafter, though perfectly innocent; and to every one that might have ſhared in the advantage of their enjoying a more plentiful income. Nor is it ſufficient, that you diſapprove ſuch conduct, unleſs you make a due proviſion, that your repreſentatives, when you are gone, ſhall not be guilty of it. You may have a better opinion of them, in this reſpect, than they deſerve: at leaſt, there can be no harm in taking a little more care of ſuch a matter, than might be abſolutely neceſſary.

One powerful motive to be careful in all the points, which I have been mentioning, is, that few things will contribute more to your maintaining while you live, and leaving when you die, the character of men of probity and honour, amongſt your neighbours in general, and your brethren of the clergy in particular, than your diligent and diſintereſted attention to act worthily and kindly in relation to your ſucceſſors, though probably you know them not, or however have no perſonal connection with them. Nor will many things throw a blacker or more laſting ſtain upon perſons, than a low cunning, or a ſelfiſh indifference, in theſe affairs. But indeed conſcience, as well as reputation, is deeply concerned in the matter, as I doubt not but you are all ſenſible. Nor ſurely will any one

elſe

elſe imagine, either that my exhortations to you, any more than yours to your hearers, imply you to be guilty of, or eſpecially inclined to any of the faults, againſt which they are levelled; or that, by ſpeaking thus long of your worldly affairs, I ſeem to think them of weight equal, or comparable, to your ſpiritual functions. But the beſt of us have need to be admoniſhed of all our duties, be they duties of higher rank or lower, each in their turns. Temporal things are not to be neglected; and thoſe leaſt of all, which are ſet apart for the ſervice of things eternal. But then we muſt be watchful over them, in order to employ them as they were meant to be employed: and if we preſerve and tranſmit them ever ſo faithfully, but uſe them unfaithfully; ſtudying only or chiefly to enrich or advance ourſelves, or gratify our ſenſual appetites, or love of diverſions, or of elegant appearance, by means of thoſe revenues, which were given us for ends widely different; (partly to make a comfortable and moderate, not a ſuperfluous and invidious proviſion for ourſelves and ours, and partly to ſerve the purpoſes of religion and charity) we offend God, ſin againſt our brethren, and provoke men to take from us what they are too ready to ſay we do no good with: as indeed little would be done, were ſuch a conduct general. It is true, and the laity ought to conſider it a great deal more than they do, that we have very few of us much, if any thing to ſpare. But they who have, ſhould *let their light ſhine before men*, and be ſeen to lay it out in pious uſes prudently choſen: and the pooreſt ſhould occaſionally give what alms they can; and make amends for their inability on this head, by a double diligence in uſeful inſtruction, pious example, and obliging behaviour to the meaneſt of their people. Without a remarkable degree of ſuch care, we ſhall have few or no friends: and notwithſtanding it, we ſhall have many enemies. This is hard treatment: but angry complaints will only make it worſe; and the moſt reaſonable expoſtulations not much better, unleſs we firſt conſider, wherein we are faulty or defective, and amend it: wherein we are unjuſtly blamed or ſuſpected, and clear ourſelves: then patiently perſevere in well-doing, *in all things approving ourſelves as the miniſters of God, by pureneſs, by knowledge, by long-ſuffering, by kindneſs, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the armour of righteouſneſs on the right*

right hand and on the left, through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report *. Other means, if they could support us, cannot enable us to answer the end of our institution. But by these we may still hope, not only to confute, but, which must ever be our chief aim, if possible, to convert, at least to mollify our adversaries; and so recommend ourselves to more impartial persons, that they may *receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls* †. Or should we, after all, in respect of ever so many, *labour in vain, and spend our strength for nought, yet our judgment is with the Lord, and our work with our God* ‡.

* 2 Cor. vi. 4, 6, 7, 8. † Jam. i. 21. ‡ Isa. xlix. 4.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE

OF

OXFORD.

In the Year 1753.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

I Have never attempted in my former viſitations, nor ſhall I in this, to entertain you with any thing new and curious: thinking it much fitter for me, and better for you, to ſpeak to you of ſuch points, immediately relating to common practice, as, though eaſily underſtood, are too frequently diſregarded. With this view I have gone through the principal parts of your duty, as parochial miniſters, in reſpect both of ſpirituals and temporals. But, beſides what is wholly incumbent on yourſelves, in ſome things you are jointly concerned with your Church-wardens: and in others, though not expreſsly commiſſioned by law to interpoſe, you may do it nevertheleſs, with peculiar propriety, weight, and influence.

Of the former ſort are thoſe offences againſt religion and morals, which the Church-wardens are bound by oath to preſent; and the Incumbent, or his Curate, impowered and charged

ged, by the 113th and following canons, to join with them in preſenting, if need be; or to preſent alone, if they refuſe. This naturally implies, what the 26th canon expreſſes, that the Miniſter is to urge the Church-wardens to perform that part of their office. Indeed your firſt endeavour ſhould be, by due inſtructions and exhortations, to hinder ſuch offences: your next, by due reproofs, public or private, to amend them. But if both prove ineffectual, what remains is, to get them corrected by authority. I am perfectly ſenſible, that both immorality and irreligion are grown almoſt beyond the reach of eccleſiaſtical power; which having, in former times, been very unwarrantably extended, hath ſince been very unjuſtly and imprudently cramped and weakened many ways. I am ſenſible alſo, that ſometimes Church-wardens, nay, even miniſters, are ſo dependent on perſons, who deſerve to be preſented, that they cannot preſent them without imminent hazard of ruining themſelves; and farther ſtill, that ſome offenders, if they were thus expoſed, would only become worſe, and ſet themſelves to make others worſe; while ſome again, as the apoſtle expreſſes it in this very caſe, would be *ſwallowed up with over much ſorrow* *. Now, ſurely it cannot have been deſigned by our gracious Redeemer, or the rulers of his church, that the power of ſpiritual cenſures, which the ſame apoſtle hath twice declared the Lord to *have given for edification, not for deſtruction* †, ſhould be exerciſed in circumſtances like theſe. Therefore, when circumſtances are evidently and undeniably of this kind, I think you ſhould not inſiſt on your Church-wardens preſenting. But there is much more danger of their being guilty of too great remiſſneſs, than running into overmuch rigour. And therefore you muſt adviſe and intreat them to make preſentments of ſinners, where probably it will be uſeful; and to contemn the diſpleaſure of bad people, when it can have no extremely ill conſequences, (of which there is commonly much more fear than is neceſſary) for the hope of their amendment and the good of others round them. The very office of Church-wardens obliges them to this: their oath yet more firmly. And if they are backward ſtill, after being told it doth; you muſt acquaint them, that you are directed by the 26th canon, (in the execution of which, however,

* 2 Cor. ii. 7. † 2 Cor. x. 8. and xiii. 10.

ever, as in all points of diſcipline, diſcretion ſhould be uſed) to refuſe them the holy communion; not indeed for every neglect of preſenting offences, but if they wilfully neglect it in deſperate defiance of their oath, when they are urged to it by their neighbours, their miniſters, or ordinary: for ſo the ſame canon deſcribes the caſe: in which caſe likewiſe you will inform them, the court is authoriſed, by canon 117, to proceed againſt them for perjury. But, along with theſe terrors, you will be ſure to join fitting encouragement. You will promiſe to defend them to the pariſhioners, and even to the perſon preſented, as doing only their duty. You will aſſure them, as you may, firſt, that the court will take notice of their preſentments no farther than is proper; ſo that they ſhall not incur the diſpleaſure of the offenders and their friends for nothing: then, that it will proceed, not with a view to gain, but to reformation and example; not with exceſſive, nor, if it can be avoided, with the utmoſt rigour, but with equity and moderation.

If all this be unſucceſsful, you muſt, in caſes that require it, offer to join with them, or even reſolve to preſent without them. But you muſt never take any ſtep in theſe matters, much leſs the more extraordinary ſteps, from motives of reſentment, intereſt, or party. If ſuch inducements can be, with any colour of reaſon, imputed to you, they will ſo grievouſly diſcredit what you do, that probably you had better do nothing. But only take care to ſhow, that you act merely from good intention, accompanied with temper and prudence, after trying gentler methods in vain: and ſome will vindicate, and even applaud you; more will inwardly and ſilently reſpect you; and the number of the reſt will not be formidable.

But then, whoever brings a complaint, muſt enable the court to take due cognizance of it: elſe preſentments will be deſpiſed; and the conſequences be worſe than if they had not been made. Evidence muſt of neceſſity be furniſhed; otherwiſe there can be no proceeding. Expences, I hope I may promiſe, will be as low as poſſible; and they ſhould be cheerfully borne, for the good of the pariſh and of the public. It is not reaſonable that the court ſhould bear them. Temporal courts never do. And beſides, there is room for plauſible, though unjuſt ſuſpicions of partiality, where the judge ap-

pears to be in effect proſecutor too, and is intereſted in condemning the party accuſed.

When perſons are preſented, you muſt uſe your beſt endeavours to make them ſorry, not merely that they are in danger of being puniſhed, but principally that they have ſinned: and in proportion as you ſucceed in that, recommend them to ſuch favour as can be ſhown them. When perſons are excommunicated, (which I heartily wiſh no one ever was but for crimes, though indeed a wilful contempt of authority is a great crime) you muſt preſs them to conſider ſeriouſly how they would be affected, if a phyſician or a lawyer of eminence pronounced their caſe deſperate; and of how much greater importance the concerns of eternity are, than thoſe of time. You muſt alſo admoniſh them, that ſlighting a cenſure, paſſed on them for their amendment, will make their condition ſtill more deplorable. And when they have been denounced excommunicate, by the 85th canon, the Church-wardens are to ſee, that, in every meeting of the congregation, they be kept out of the church. Nor muſt you ſuffer them to be ſureties for children in baptiſm, to receive the Holy Euchariſt, or to have Chriſtian burial. Farther, if they continue without abſolution for three months, the 65th canon directs you to declare them excommunicate in the pariſh-church every half year; that others, meaning ſuch as have no neceſſary connections with them, may thereby be admoniſhed to refrain their company, and excited the rather to procure out a writ *de excommunicato capiendo*; that is, if the circumſtances of the caſe make it requiſite. Again, when perſons do penance, you muſt be diligent to make them ſeriouſly ſenſible of the uſefulneſs of ſuch diſcipline; and the unſpeakable obligations they have to the goſpel of Chriſt, which alone aſſures men of forgiveneſs on any terms. And laſtly, both on all ſuch, and all other fit occaſions, you muſt remind your people, that however the cenſures of the church may be relaxed or evaded, the final judgment of God on obſtinate ſinners is both unavoidable and inſupportable.

Beſides the preſentment of perſons who give offence, you are concerned likewiſe in that of things belonging to the church, which are not kept in good repair and order.

I have already ſpoken to you concerning the repair of your houſes and chancels; and enlarged on the reaſons why both,

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but especially the latter, should be always preserved, not only in a firm and safe, but decent and respectable state. Now the same reasons hold, in regard to the rest of the church: and after you have set the example in your own part, you may, with reputation and weight, call on your parishioners to do what is proper in theirs. And indeed you are bound to it. For, as John of Athon hath justly observed *, *Licet per consuetudinem exoneretur rector a sumptibus præstandis, non tamen eximitur a cura & solicitudine impendendâ.* Thus far even the body of the church is still under your inspection; and if any thing be remarkably amiss there, and you take no notice, good persons will lament it, as a bad sign and of bad consequence; others will make your indifference a plea to excuse their own; and yet, while they are glad of it, will be likely enough to condemn you for it: and perhaps be led by it to think meanly of religion, as well as of you. Besides, Church-wardens have often but little sense of propriety in these matters; therefore you should labour to give them a sense of it: convince them, by reason and scripture, of the honour due to the house of God: show them, that their own honour too is interested: that a church in handsome condition is a credit to the whole parish; and in particular to the officers, who have put it in that condition, and whose names will be long remembered on that account. They are often afraid of the expence. Argue with them, that things may be done gradually, and so the expence be rendered almost imperceptible; persuade them to lessen their expences in needless matters; in eating and drinking at visitations, and on other occasions, sometimes to excess, never to any good purpose: and observe to them, how much righter and more commendable it would be, to lay out or lay up that money for proper uses: how shameful indeed, to squander it in riot and folly, and be never the better, but the worse the next day; when they might dispose of it so, as to see the good effects of it for years, and have them seen for ages. If still you cannot influence the present Church-wardens, try their successors. You have a concurrent right with the parishioners in chusing them; and if your opinions differ, you are to chuse one, they another; unless there be a custom to the contrary. Surely, then within some reasonable time, you may get such as will hearken to you. If you fail of success that way, desire your people to reflect how their money

* Const. Othob. 17. verb. ad hoc tenentur p. 113.

goes; not in fees of viſitations, which are no higher now, than when the value of money was thrice, perhaps five times higher, but in extravagance and intemperance: that therefore they ought not to complain of the court, but of their own officers; indeed ought to diſallow the wrong and idle articles of their accounts; and may be aſſured, the court will ſupport them in doing ſo.

Sometimes the Church-wardens are willing to lay out the money as they ought, but the pariſhioners unwilling. In that caſe you muſt acquaint the former, that no man's conſent is wanting for their repairing and keeping in good order, both the church and every thing belonging to it, which is either neceſſary, or which they found there: nor is the conſent of every man requiſite, but of the majority only of a pariſh-meeting, duly called, for adding any thing new, provided the ordinary approve it. However, they ſhould do their utmoſt, and you ſhould aſſiſt them, to procure the concurrence of all the pariſhioners; or, at leaſt, of as many of them as poſſible: to whom you will repreſent, for this end, that a moderate expence now will prevent a much greater hereafter: that almoſt all the churches in the nation were built many ages ago, and a very great part of them about the ſame time: that without conſtant and ſubſtantial repairs, in another generation or another century, they will be falling at the ſame time; and how will they be rebuilt? The inhabitants, if we may gueſs from what we ſee at preſent, will be both leſs able and leſs inclined. As for help from Briefs; thoſe for other things produce but little, but thoſe for churches extremely little, to the great ſhame indeed of perſons who call themſelves Chriſtians: and you ſhould labour to rectify their prejudices on this head, and excite them to be more charitable. But God knows whether they will; and if hereafter they ſhould, what can be hoped from it, when almoſt every pariſh in the land will want a Brief? In many, it is to be feared, there will be no churches; in others, wretchedly mean ones; to the contempt of all religion amongſt infidels, and of the proteſtant religion amongſt papiſts. Repeat and inculcate it therefore on your people, that they muſt take care of the churches they have: if not, their poſterity will run the riſque of having none. Too many will ſcarcely be moved, even by that conſideration; but there is the more need of moving ſuch as you can;

can; and, getting into a good condition of moving more, by all proper methods of recommending the goſpel and yourſelves.

But to perſons of rank and figure in your pariſhes, one ſhould hope you might apply with very fair proſpect of ſucceſs. To theſe you may ſurely repreſent at favourable ſeaſons, that labouring people part very hardly with the money, which they get very hardly; that therefore their ſuperiors ſhould not only uſe their influence and example to make them willing, but indeed ſhould do for them what perhaps they are almoſt as unable to do, as they are unwilling; eſpecially what goes any length beyond repairs abſolutely neceſſary; for that people of low degree, though they may have ſome notion of neatneſs and elegance, yet will murmur grievouſly to pay much for it in their churches, and part of their ill-humour will fall on the doctrine taught there: that eſpecially if they are tenants, their concern in the place being temporary, and poſſibly alſo ſhort or uncertain they will of courſe endeavour to ſhift off the burthen from themſelves: but the landlords have a more laſting intereſt, and will find their account better in doing things early at their own coſt, than in letting them run on, till the coſt is much greater: for then, in ſome ſhape or other, it muſt come out of their pockets. With theſe conſiderations you will not fail to join others of a higher nature: that ſacred fabrics are appointed to the nobleſt of uſes, the worſhip of the great God; and to preſerve or put them in a condition ſuitable to it, is one very proper method of expreſſing and cheriſhing a ſenſe of piety in their own minds, and ſpreading it through their families, neighbours, and dependants; whereas, by ſuffering his houſe to be an object of contempt and ſcorn, while perhaps they ſpare nothing to beautify their own, they will be underſtood, and will tempt all around them, to deſpiſe the ſervice performed there, and him to whom it is paid: that repairing and embelliſhing their churches will employ the poor full as beneficially as adorning their ſeats and gardens, and procure them a much better grounded and more general eſteem. Indeed it is ſurpriſing, that noblemen and gentlemen will ſquander vaſt ſums in the gratification of private luxury and vanity, for which more condemn than applaud them; and not conſider, that much ſmaller ſums beſtowed on public works, e-

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ſpecially in honour of religion, would gain them the admiration of a whole country, and the peculiar bleſſing of many, whom they would thus eaſe from burthens; beſides that, they might ſhow their good taſte, if that be the favourite point with them, no leſs in one way than the other. But even heathen writers have obſerved long ago, that exceſſive perſonal indulgence, and mean-ſpirited parſimony in what regards the community, are often companions, and always ill ſymptoms *.

But you may preſs the obligation of repairing and ornamenting yet more ſtrongly, both on ſuch of the nobility gentry, and on ſuch colleges and eccleſiaſtical perſons or bodies, as are impropriators; and likewiſe on the leſſees of theſe latter; becauſe they have a more beneficial intereſt in the eſtate than the leſſors. Being poſſeſſed of the greater ſhare of what was originally given for the ſupport of the ſervice and the fabric, they are bound, at leaſt in conſcience, to take care of both, if it be needful: but of one part of the fabric, the chancel, they are indiſputably by law to take care. And yet, too commonly, even thoſe amongſt them, who ſhould be the moſt attentive to this point, ſtrangely neglect it; or throw it on their tenants, who they know will of courſe neglect it, and concern themſelves no farther. So their chancels are only in ſuch ſort of repair, as their barns and out-houſes. Now, handſome benefactions to put them in a better condition, given from time to time, and eſpecially when good fines are received, would ſhow piety and generoſity at once; would abate the unjuſt envy and hatred, to which academical and eccleſiaſtical owners of eſtates are liable; and ſet an example, which others might probably imitate.

I have already ſaid, in ſpeaking of chancels, that the ornaments of ſacred places ought not to be light and gaudy, but modeſt and grave. Amongſt theſe, a very proper one, of the cheaper kind, is, writing on the walls choſen ſentences of ſcripture. This was done as early as the fourth century †: but in proceſs of time ceaſed to be done, at leaſt in the vulgar tongue: and being reſtored at the Reformation, was forbidden, as promoting that cauſe, by Biſhop Bonner, in Queen Mary's

* Cic. pro Flacco, Hor. Od. I. 2. 15. Sat. L. 2. 2. 103, 104, 105.

† Bing. viii. 8, 3.

Mary's reign *. It not only diverſifies the walls very agreeably and decently, but affords uſeful matter for meditation to the people, before the ſervice begins; and may afford them uſeful admonition, when their eyes and thoughts are wandering in the courſe of it. For theſe reaſons, I preſume, the 82d canon directs, that ſuch ſentences be written in convenient places; and likewiſe, that the ten commandments be ſet upon the eaſt end of every church and chapel: to which undoubtedly the creed and Lord's prayer, though not mentioned in the canon, are very fit companions.

You muſt alſo endeavour, that ſuch care may be taken of the furniture of the church, and whatever is uſed in it, as the canons and rubrics and the nature of the thing require: that the ſurplice be originally of proper linen, and kept clean, and renewed before it becomes contemptible by age: that the bible and prayer-books be whole and unſullied, and well bound: that the veſſels for the celebration of both the ſacraments, and the cover of the holy table, but more eſpecially the bread and wine placed upon it, be ſuitable in all reſpects to the ſolemnity: not ſuch as may give diſguſt to the more delicate, and tempt them to abhor, as the ſcripture expreſſion is, *the offering of the Lord* †. Theſe are in their kind, points of importance; and ſuch as you may for the moſt part eaſily carry. Another thing, worthy of notice, is the condition of your church-yards. I take it for granted, though I am afraid I forgot to name it, that you keep thoſe, which belong to yourſelves, neat and decent: not turning in cattle to defile them and trample down the grave-ſtones; and make conſecrated ground ſuch, as you not ſuffer courts before your own doors to be; but taking the profits of the herbage in ſuch manner, as may rather add beauty to the place. And I hope where a church-yard belongs to an impropriator, you will do your beſt to get the ſame reſpect paid it; and to whomſoever it belongs, the fences well kept up.

If, in any or all of the particulars, which I have ſpecified, your repreſentations will be leſs offenſively introduced, or your attempts be of more weight, for your being able to ſay, that I directed you to make them, I do hereby direct you accordingly; and deſire you to ſay, that I did. Nor ſhould you be

* Wilkins, vol. 4. p. 108. † 1 Sam. ii. 17.

be contented with a tranſient mention of the ſubject once or twice; but, where there is any hope, return to it on proper occaſions, and try the force of modeſt importunity. If, after competent trial, you find no effect, you muſt urge the church-wardens, to preſent what is amiſs, if they will do no more. Indeed ſuch things as belong to their own care, they ſhould not preſent, but amend; and the canons require, not the former, but the latter. Only when they have not time for the latter, the former is all they can do; and when they have, it is better than doing nothing. For it gives notice, and furniſhes room for admonitions and injunctions. If there be need, here again you muſt encourage them to preſent, by engaging to plead their cauſe with the pariſhioners. You may alſo ſafely promiſe them, that they ſhall ſuffer no oppreſſive or hard treatment, ſhall not be required to lay out upon any thing more than is fitting, and ſhall have reaſonable time allowed, even for that. I need not ſay, that both to qualify yourſelves for preſſing them to preſent, and on many other accounts, you muſt take effectual care, that nothing belonging to you be preſentable. Elſe they will have a ready anſwer for you: and it will be a ſad thing to ſtand in awe and be at the mercy of thoſe, who ought to reverence you. If you cannot prevail on them otherwiſe, I apprehend you may join with them; and if you cannot prevail on them at all, I apprehend you may preſent without them, in the caſe of repairs, as well as offences, by virtue of the interpretation, which practice hath put on the above-mentioned canon: though it ſpeaks, I own, expreſsly of nothing beſides offences. But, in doing either of theſe things, you muſt be ſure to obſerve the cautions given under the former head.

Yet after all, I am well aware, that you may often have great difficulties to encounter, poſſibly ſometimes too great to ſurmount. And to diminiſh them for you, I have endeavoured to procure a parochial viſitation from the Archdeacon, which he hath promiſed. But then, for the credit of your pariſhioners and your own, let this be an inducement to put things in good order, that he may find them ſo; not to leave them in bad order, that he may rectify them.

Another very uſeful inſtitution, for theſe and many valuable purpoſes, was that of rural deans; which took place here

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before the conqueſt, was kept up till the great rebellion, was reſtored afterwards in ſeveral Dioceſes, and particularly in this by the admirable Biſhop Fell *, was found not quite extinct and was completely revived by the late excellent Biſhop of Glouceſter †, in that County, and is preſerved to this day in ſome parts of the nation beſides. Theſe Deans, being choſen out of the reſident parochial clergy, could inſpect, with ſmall trouble, the churches and pariſhes within their ſeveral narrow diſtricts; and being bound to report what they found amiſs, could do it with little or no offence. In the latter end of Queen Anne's, and the beginning of the late King's reign, the convocation made ſome progreſs towards the re-eſtabliſhment and better regulation of this office. When that, or any other branch of diſcipline, may be the ſubject of public conſideration again, is very uncertain. I ſhould be very glad, with your approbation, to ſet it up once more amongſt us, in ſuch form as might be moſt beneficial and ſatisfactory: but contented at preſent with hinting the matter, I leave and recommend it to your ſerious thoughts.

A third particular, of conſiderable importance, in which you are jointly concerned with the church-wardens, is the keeping of the regiſter-book. The 70th canon directs, that it be of parchment; and though an act of parliament, lately paſſed, allows marriages to be regiſtered in a paper book: yet parchment is far more durable; nor is the difference of expence worth regarding, as it returns ſo ſeldom. This book ſhould be ſtrongly bound, and not over large; leſt it ſhould be worn and damaged, before it is filled. For the ſafe preſervation of it, and doubtleſs of all preceding books of the ſame kind, the canon orders, that a cheſt be provided with three locks and keys; one for you, one for each of the church-wardens, who are ordinarily two; and that on Sundays, if there hath been any chriſtening, marriage, or burial, in the week before, it ſhall be entered there. I am afraid it is ſeldom thus kept: and yet there would be no great trouble in it, after a little uſe. Or where that is otherwiſe, either the miniſter or a church-warden ſhould keep it; and each of them ſhould ſee from time to time, how it is kept. The entries, if they cannot well be made every Sunday, ſhould be made very frequently,

* Kennet. Paroch. Ant. p. 653. † Biſhop Benſon.

quently, and in the mean time the miniſter, if he hath not the book, ſhould take memorandums. He is the perſon directed to write in it, and uſually much the fitteſt. But if, through any accident that happens not to be ſo, he ſhould appoint a proper perſon, and ſuperintend him. The names and ſurnames of the parents ought to be added, in regiſtering not only baptiſms, where it is enjoined, but marriages and burials too, as far as may be; for it may prevent doubts and diſputes. It will alſo be very uſeful, to put down the day of the birth and death of each perſon, as well as of the baptiſm and burial. The late act above mentioned hath directed farther, that every page of the regiſter of marriages be numbered, to diſcover if any leaf be afterwards cut out; and ruled with lines at equal diſtances, to diſcover if any article be afterwards put in. And you will do very well to obſerve the ſame precautions in regiſtering baptiſms and burials. When a page is filled, the canon requires the miniſter and church-wardens to ſubſcribe their names; which they ſhould do juſt below the the laſt line. And if this be not done immediately, it may, without any inconvenience, be done ſoon after; and was done by me and the church-wardens, for many years, in one of the moſt populous pariſhes of the kingdom. Laſtly, the canon requires, that an atteſted copy of this book be annually tranſmitted to the biſhop's regiſtry, received without fee, and faithfully preſerved there; and it authorizes me to proceed againſt thoſe, who are negligent about any of its directions. I muſt therefore both intreat and inſiſt, that you inquire in what condition your old and your preſent regiſter books are, and get them kept for the future as they ought. I have more than once been put under great difficulties in ordinations, for want of exactneſs in the regiſter of baptiſms. That of marriages is of ſo great concern, that altering it deſignedly, to eſtabliſh or void a marriage, is by the act above mentioned made felony. In all caſes the book, faithfully kept, is good evidence; and falſifying it is puniſhable at common law. I would only obſerve further, on this head, that in the preamble of a bill, which paſſed the Houſe of Commons this laſt ſeſſion, and had a ſecond reading in the Houſe of Lords, it was aſſerted as notorious, that "great inconveniences have ariſen from the preſent defective manner, in which parochial regiſters are formed; and the looſe and uncertain method, in which they are

"kept

"kept and preſerved; whereby the evidence of deſcents is "frequently loſt and rendered precarious." So far as this may be fact, it will be moſt for our honour to amend it, without the interpoſition of the Legiſlature.

A fourth Point, of which I hope you will think yourſelves bound, if not by law, yet in conſcience, to take a joint care with the church-wardens, is that of parochial charities. The miniſter is the repreſentative of the church, intruſted with its intereſts; and you ought to endeavour, that ſuch benefactions be firſt preſerved, and then applied in a proper manner.

If it be doubtful, whether ſuch or ſuch a donation hath been given to your church or poor, or the ſupport of a ſchool in your pariſh, you will make proper inquiry concerning the matter. If it be given by any writing, you will procure that writing, or an atteſted copy of it, to be laid up ſafely, either in the pariſh cheſt, or the biſhop's regiſtry; indeed a copy in each place would be beſt; and an account of the gift ſhould be inſerted in your pariſh book. For if deeds are left in private hands, and eſpecially without authentic notice where they are left, they are ſometimes deſignedly ſuppreſſed; and often undeſignedly deſtroyed or loſt, through the ignorance or careleſſneſs of the perſons poſſeſſed of them. It will alſo be very proper, to have a table mentioning the charity, hung up in your church, that a grateful remembrance of the benefactors may be continued to poſterity, and others incited to follow their good example: as a paper of directions, drawn up by the lower houſe of convocation in 1710, hath well expreſſed it *. If the benefaction be an eſtate veſted in truſtees, it will be very material to get the truſt renewed in due time; elſe in all likelihood there will be expence, if not danger; and to truſtees of as good credit and ability as poſſible. They muſt likewiſe be warned, never to let out ſuch lands on long leaſes, or at very low rents, in favour of any body; but to raiſe the rents when they can; at leaſt to vary them, which will make it eaſy to raiſe them, when there is opportunity: otherwiſe it will ſoon be pretended, that they have no right to raiſe them; of which there are ſome unhappy inſtances in this Dioceſe. If the gift be in money, you muſt preſs to have it pla-

* See Wilkins, vol. 4. p. 638.

ced in the public funds, in caſe it be conſiderable enough; or elſe in the beſt private hands, and on the beſt ſecurity that can be obtained; paying no regard in ſuch caſes to perſonal friendſhips; and being particularly careful, that pariſh officers do not keep it in their own cuſtody. If they do, the intereſt will uſually be paid out of the public money, and moſt probably the principal will be loſt in a few years.

But charities are preſerved in vain, unleſs they are well applied; and they are often ſadly miſapplied. Gifts to the church, where it is not otherwiſe expreſſed, muſt be ſuppoſed intended for beautifying the church; elſe it will be never the better for ſuch gifts; for it will be equally repaired without them: the pariſhioners are bound to that: and the chief of the burthen uſually falls upon the richeſt, for whoſe relief charities were certainly not intended. And yet ſuch benefactions are too commonly employed, not only in mere repairs, but in what hath no connection with the fabric; in providing bread and wine for the communion, in paying churchwardens bills for all ſorts of things, it may be for extravagant and riotous entertainments amongſt the reſt, in eaſing the poors rates, in I know not what; and the church all the time, inſtead of being any way improved, ſuffered to grow dirty and even ruinous. A lamentable abuſe of this kind, (where a ſteeple fell down, and was in part rebuilt by contribution, while an eſtate, more than ſufficient to have kept the whole building in good order and beauty, was perverted to other uſes) I have taken much pains to rectify, but fear it is not thoroughly rectified yet. Again, gifts to the poor were certainly intended for the benefit of the poor; to make proviſion for ſuch of them as are not on the pariſh liſt, or a better proviſion for ſuch as are. And yet they are ſometimes embezzled and ſquandered, in a great meaſure, if not wholly; ſometimes beſtowed to ſerve private or party purpoſes; and very frequently ſunk into the legal rate; ſo the wealthy are benefited; and the needy have not a farthing more, than if nothing had been given for them.

I know it is not always eaſy, perhaps not always poſſible for you, to remedy theſe ill practices. But a great part of the blame will be laid on you, right or wrong, unleſs you try to remedy them. And it may prove leſs difficult than you imagine

imagine. Church-wardens and overſeers perhaps are ignorant, or going on thoughtleſsly, and would be thankful to you for good advice: or however would be ruled by it, on your repreſenting to them the heinouſneſs of robbing God or the poor; and the honour it will do them, and the conſolation it will afford them, to have put things into a right channel. Or ſuppoſing them backward to comply, you may be able to get conſiderable perſons in the pariſh or neighbourhood to ſecond you. At leaſt you will get the reputation of a moſt laudable zeal, and if you conduct that zeal aright, of diſcretion alſo; and theſe together may produce unexpected ſucceſs; eſpecially where the abuſe is not yet become inveterate. But if nothing elſe will do, and the caſe be plain, and the object of ſufficient importance: Recourſe ſhould be had to the authority of the law; and you ſhould be willing to bear a proportion of the charges, if it be requiſite and you are able; only taking the ſtricteſt care to proceed with mildneſs and fairneſs.

I have now finiſhed the courſe of directions to you, which I began 15 years ago. And as I can truly ſay, that in this, and every part of my behaviour as your Biſhop, I have, thro' the Divine aſſiſtance, diligently laboured, to do my duty with uprightneſs, and promote your good and that of your pariſhioners, preſent and future; ſo I hope you will accept my endeavours with candour, and ſtudy to profit by them; excuſing my failings, which I know have been many, and will now be too likely to increaſe. I am advancing apace into the decline of age. Three of my brethren *, my oldeſt and beſt friends, have gone before me in leſs than twelve months. I muſt expect to follow them ſoon. Whether I may live; or, if I live, whether I may be able to meet you thus again, God only can foreſee. May he grant us to meet in a better world!

But before I conclude, permit me to ſubjoin, to theſe general admonitions, a few words concerning two particular occurrences.

In the firſt place, I return you my hearty thanks for the pains which you have taken in behalf of the Society for propagating the goſpel. The collection hath upon the whole been made

* Biſhops Butler, Benſon, and Berkeley.

made very ſucceſsfully throughout the kingdom; and amounts to almoſt 19000*l.* if not more; whereas ten years ago it fell ſhort of 15000*l.* But I believe the contribution of this county hath been in proportion the largeſt of any. The laſt time it was barely 300*l.*; nor was that to be accounted ſmall; and now it is very near 500*l.*: I mean in both caſes exclusive of the univerſity; which diſtinguiſhed itſelf very honourably then, and, I doubt not, will at preſent. May God increaſe, and bleſs, and reward the zeal of all his ſervants every where for ſupporting, and enlarging the kingdom of his Son, and making the confeſſion of his name effectual to the ſalvation of mankind.

The other ſubject, on which I would ſpeak to you, is the conteſt about repreſentatives for this county in the next parliament. Let no one be alarmed. I need not, and I do not mean to give you, at a meeting of this nature, my opinion which of the candidates you ought to prefer: of that I ſay no more here, than that you ought to regard, in the firſt place, the inſeparable intereſts of the excellent church we are members of, and, its only human ſupport, the juſt and gracious government we live under; then other ſubordinate conſiderations. My purpoſe is merely to exhort you, (*and I beſeech you, brethren, ſuffer the word of exhortation* *,) that on this occaſion, *your converſation be ſuch as becometh the goſpel of Chriſt:* in doing which, I have neither one party, nor one perſon amongſt you, more in my view than another: but, if I may uſe the Apoſtle's words, *am jealous with a godly jealouſy over you all* †. I cannot indeed ſuppoſe, that any of you would be guilty of the groſſer faults too common at ſuch times, or any wilful wrong behaviour. But in the midſt of ſo many claſhings, provocations, and diſappointments, as will happen, ſo many miſtakes and miſrepreſentations as ariſe, one knows not how; the incitements to uncharitable and contemptuous thoughts, to unadviſed and injurious words, in anger or in mirth, nay, to unkind and hard and even unjuſt actions, are very great, and the beſt of us all ſhould be continually ſuggeſting to our minds proper cautions for avoiding theſe dangers. Elſe we ſhall fall into ſin againſt God and our neighbour:

* Heb. xiii. 22. † 2 Cor. xi. 2.

bour: we ſhall loſe the eſteem of part of thoſe whoſe improvement by us depends on their eſteeming us; and ſet a bad inſtead of a good example to the reſt. Let every one of us therefore be very watchful over our conduct: or, if we have not been ſo, let us amend it: and if we find preſerving our innocence difficult, let us meddle the leſs with theſe matters: for indeed, being over buſy about them is not very ſuitable to our function. But, while we are ſtrict with ourſelves, let us be very mild in regard to others, whom we think to have done amiſs: we may blame them without cauſe; or if we do not, it is eaſy to err; and we, amongſt others, are ſadly liable to faults. But let us be eſpecially mild towards our own brethren. For why ſhould we diminiſh our little remaining ſtrength by inteſtine diſſenſions, and teach yet more perſons to think ill or meanly of us, than do already? Surely the common cauſe of religion and virtue, which we are jointly intruſted to ſupport, ſhould have infinitely greater force to unite us, than any thing elſe to divide us.

Next to yourſelves, you will ſtudy to preſerve as many of your pariſhioners as poſſible, from the ſins *that ſo eaſily beſet them* at theſe ſeaſons of epidemical unreaſonableneſs and licentiouſneſs. Thoſe, who are of your own ſide, you may counſel and reprove more freely. With the reſt you muſt be extremely calm and patient: take the moſt favourable opportunities, and uſe the moſt perſuaſive methods of ſpeaking: but, in ſome way or other, private or public, all, who need it, ſhould be told, *whether they will hear or whether they will forbear*, that the great Chriſtian laws of dutifulneſs to ſuperiors, mutual good-will, forbearance, forgiveneſs, equity, veracity, moderation, ſobriety, loſe not the leaſt of their obligation during the continuance of theſe diſputes: that all virtues are to be chiefly exerciſed, when they are chiefly tried: and that therefore, now more particularly, you, as the Apoſtle directs, muſt *put them in mind*, and they muſt keep it in mind, *to be ſubject to principalities and powers, to obey magiſtrates, to be ready to every good work, to ſpeak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, ſhewing all meekneſs unto all men* *.

I end

* Titus iii. 1, 2

I end this long discourse in the words of the same Apostle: *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable,* (for so the word is rightly translated in the margin,) *whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of* and do *these things: and the God of peace shall be with you* *.

* Philip. iv. 8, 9.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE

OF

CANTERBURY,

In the Year 1758.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE diſpoſer of all things having permitted his Majeſty, by the advice of his faithful ſervants, to nominate me for your Biſhop: though I ſaw many reaſons to dread this promotion, ariſing from the difficulties of the office and of the times, from the great qualities of my predeceſſors, and my own increaſing weakneſſes; yet I thought myſelf bound to obey his commands, and with the ſame gratitude for his favourable opinion, as if I had wiſhed to receive them; determining, through God's grace, to perform the duties of my ſtation as well as I could; and hoping for the candor, the aſſiſtance and the prayers of good people. To make ſome amends by diligence for my deficiencies in other reſpects, I reſolved immediately to viſit my Dioceſe: for which purpoſe we are here aſſembled.

Theſe meetings were deſigned, partly to give the clergy opportunities of confetring with each other, and conſulting

their ſuperiors, on matters relating to their profeſſing; and I am very deſirous, that you ſhould render them as beneficial in this way as poſſible; but principally, to give Biſhops opportunities of exhorting and cautioning their clergy, either on ſuch general ſubjects as are always uſeful, or on ſuch particular occaſions as the circumſtances of things, or the inquiries, made at or againſt theſe times, point out; and of interpoſing their authority, if there be need; which, amongſt you, I am perſuaded, there will not. To provide more fully for your inſtruction, I have ordered a charge to be ſent you, which I delivered to the clergy of Oxfordſhire, and printed at their requeſt, about twenty years ago. Would God it were become unſeaſonable now. But, as unhappily it is not, I earneſtly recommend the contents of it to your moſt ſerious thoughts; and would have you look on what I ſhall at preſent ſay further, as ſupplemental to it.

Counſels and admonitions, to parochial miniſters pre-ſuppoſe their reſidence. The founders of pariſhes provided them with glebes, and built houſes for them, purpoſely that they might reſide. The laws of the church have from the beginning, and do ſtill require, as indeed common equity doth, that this valuable conſideration, for which theſe endowments were given, ſhould be faithfully paid. And going over and performing the ſervice from time to time, or engaging ſome other clergyman to take care of it, or of the occaſional part of it, ſeldom anſwers the original intention. Your people will not ſo readily, and cannot ſo conveniently, apply to the miniſter of another pariſh: And when they do, his aſſiſtance, for the moſt part, will be leſs early, or leſs conſtant, than it ſhould; though doubtleſs they, who have undertaken to ſupply their neighbours abſence, ought to do it very conſcientiouſly. But beſides, even the Sunday duty, when the incumbent unneceſſarily comes from a diſtant place to do it, will be conſidered as accompanied with ſomething like a breach of the Sunday, will not always be kept to the ſtated hours, will often be hurried over indecently: the catechiſm will either not be taught or not expounded, if the diſtance be at all conſiderable; nor probably will the ſermon be well adapted to the audience. For it is only living amongſt your people, and knowing them thoroughly, that can ſhow you, what is level to their capacities, and ſuited to their circumſtances; what

will

will reform their faults, and improve their hearts in true goodneſs. Yet this is your buſineſs with them; and unleſs you perform it, every thing elſe is nothing. Further, ſuch as want your help moſt may not come to your ſermons, or may not apply them to their own caſe, or may need to have them enforced by conſiderations peculiar to themſelves, and unfit to be ſpecified in public. Speaking to them ſeparately, and agreeably to their ſeveral ſtates of mind and life, may have unforeſeen influence. And being always at hand, to awe the diſorderly and countenance the well-behaved, to adviſe and comfort the diſeaſed and afflicted, to relieve or procure relief for the neceſſitous, to compoſe little differences and diſcourage wrong cuſtoms in the beginning, to promote friendly offices, and keep up an edifying and entertaining converſation in a neighbourhood, muſt add incredible weight to public inſtruction.

Indeed your congregations expect theſe things from you, and have a right to expect them. The nature of your office requires them: you have all at your ordination expreſsly promiſed to *uſe both public and private monitions and exhortations, both to the ſick and whole within your cures, as need ſhall require and occaſion be given, the Lord being your helper.* Now we cannot uſe them duly, without being reſident. But further ſtill, ſince their ordination, all Vicars have ſworn particularly to be reſident unleſs they are diſpenſed with, which means by lawful authority; nor doth any diſpenſation of a Biſhop laſt beyond his own time; or beyond the term, for which he gave it; or, if that were indefinite, beyond his pleaſure: points, which vicars ought to conſider much more ſeriouſly than they often do. And every Rector hath ſworn in general, to *obey* his Biſhop *in all things lawful and honeſt.* Now ſurely reſidence is lawful and honeſt; and what is puniſhable by a Biſhop may, if done without his leave, be well interpreted diſobedience to him: and the non-reſidence of rectors is puniſhable juſt in the ſame manner with that of Vicars.

It muſt not therefore be pleaded, that however neceſſary the reſidence of ſome miniſter may be, that of a curate may ſuffice. For your engagement is, not merely that the ſeveral duties of your pariſh ſhall be done, but that you perſonally will do them; and if it were enough to ſubſtitute another to

do them, a layman would be, in point of reaſon and conſcience, as capable of holding a benefice, as a man in holy orders. Beſides, a curate will uſually have leſs knowledge and leſs experience than the incumbent; and he and the pariſhioners will conceive, that they are leſs related to each other. He will conſider himſelf, as being with them only for an uncertain, and, he may hope, a ſhort time; which will tempt him to neglect them. And they will conſider him, as not the perſon, who hath authority over them: which will tempt them to diſregard him; eſpecially as the largeſt ſalary, that can be legally appointed, or generally afforded to a curate, will not enable him to recommend himſelf to them by doing good amongſt them in any expenſive way; whilſt yet the people will think, and juſtly too, that the whole income of the benefice was intended to procure them a miniſter, to do them as much good in every way, as could reaſonably be expected from it.

There are indeed caſes, in which the law diſpenſes with holding two livings, and by conſequence allows abſence from one. But perſons ought to conſider well; ſuppoſing they can with innocence take the benefit of that law; whether they can do it on other terms, than their diſpenſation and their bond expreſſes, of preaching yearly 13 ſermons, and keeping two months hoſpitality, in the pariſh where they reſide leaſt. For the leave given them on theſe conditions, is not intended to be given them, however legally valid, if the conditions are neglected; always excepting where juſt impediments happen. There are likewiſe caſes, in which the non-reſidence of perſons, who have only one living, is permitted by law. But ſome of theſe alſo are put under limitations, beyond which the permiſſion doth not reach.

Further ſtill, I am ſenſible, that conſiderations of health and ſtrength, and particular circumſtances of incumbents or their families, require leave of abſence to be ſometimes allowed, where the law makes no allowance. But then it ſhould never be taken for any conſiderable time, without being aſked; nor ſhould it be aſked without good cauſe. And mere fancy, or deſire of living more at eaſe, or in a cheerfuller, and, it may be, leſs clerical manner, is by no means a ſufficient cauſe. Nor indeed is the allegation of health to be urged too far, or be too much regarded. For places, called unwholeſome, prove

upon

upon trial very wholesome to many persons; and those, which are least so, must have some ministers in or near them; and whom rather, generally speaking, than such as enjoy the whole profits? Much less is indulgence to be granted for every present convenience, or prospect of temporal advantage; which if clergymen appear to have greatly at heart, and the care of their parishes but little, indeed it looks very ill.

Another plea may be offered by some, that though they live not on their own cures, they serve others. And it is not always an insufficient one. But, with very few exceptions, the most natural and most useful method by far is, that each take the oversight of the parish, which properly belongs to him; and absenting himself from that, for a little more income, a little more agreeableness, or any slight reason, is unbecoming and unwarrantable behaviour.

At the same time, I acknowledge that the poorness of some benefices makes the residence of a distinct minister upon each of them impracticable; and therefore they must be served from an adjoining parish, or a greater distance; and no more duty expected, than there is a competent provision for. But then I fear, indeed I have found, that in some benefices, not so poor, one minister supplies two churches on a Sunday; contrary to a repeated injunction of successive Archbishops to their Suffragans, which they certainly designed to observe themselves; and the words of which are these; *that you do not allow any minister to serve more than one church or chapel in one day, except that chapel be a member of the parish church; or united thereunto; and unless the said church or chapel be not able to maintain a curate.* The consequence of disregarding this injunction is, not only the very bad one, that the service is performed in irreverent haste, but that catechising is neglected in both places, if not altogether, yet in a great degree. Nay, perhaps for great part of the year, if not the whole, each of them hath prayers but once. Where indeed it can be truly alledged in this last case, that the inhabitants of each parish not only with convenience may, but actually do, attend at both churches, the plea must be allowed its weight. But, as to other excuses: If the number of the people be small, the service is not less enjoined, and is more easily performed: If they had rather have a sermon at another church, than merely prayers

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at their own; they ought to have more than prayers; an expoſition of the catechiſm, which they will account equivalent to a ſermon; or you may reduce it with eaſe into the form of a ſermon; and then many of them will come to their own church, who now go to no other, but profane the reſt of the day: If they are content with part of the Sunday ſervice, which however may be ſaid or believed without ſufficient ground, yet probably they would be glad of the whole. But ſuppoſing them to be indifferent about it, or even averſe from it, their miniſter is bound to ſhow them, that they ought not. And how long ſoever this hath been the practice; if it ought not to have been ſo at all, the longer the worſe. My pious and learned predeceſſor, Archbiſhop Potter, lamented heavily to me the irregularities of this kind, which he found in this Dioceſe; and if any remain, I muſt, after his example, endeavour to have them rectified.

I hope they will be rectified by the beſt method, beyond compariſon; your own ſerious reflections on what you owe to your flocks, and what you owe to the great Shepherd of ſouls. Though you are ever ſo expreſsly permitted by human laws to be abſent from your cures, or by your ordinary to ſerve them, or let them be ſerved, by halves; you are anſwerable to an infinitely higher tribunal for what God, and not man alone, hath made your duty. Therefore, if you regard the peace of your own ſouls and your final comfort, you will never do any of theſe things, unleſs very ſtrong reaſons oblige you to it; and you will never be glad of ſuch reaſons, but heartily ſorry. You will give your pariſhes both morning and evening prayer, wherever it is poſſible; and you will ſupply them in perſon, unleſs particular circumſtances render it impracticable, or unleſs, by living at a diſtance for the preſent, you are more uſeful to religion ſome other way, and peculiarly qualified for that uſefulneſs. Far from catching at weak pretences, you will be rather diffident about ſtrong inducements; and much readier to follow the directions, than ſolicit the indulgence of your ſuperiors. But if any do chuſe the worſe part, they muſt remember, that we Biſhops are bound to oppoſe, inſtead of conſulting their inclinations, from concern for them, as well as their pariſhioners. And therefore you will not ſurely think it real good-nature to connive at liberties of this kind preſumptuouſly taken without leave,

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or to grant requeſts made for them, as matters of courſe; nor impute it to a fondneſs of exerciſing power, when compliance with the rules of the church is required; nor yet haſtily condemn it, as partial behaviour, if an indulgence, denied to one, is granted to another; for there may be, in the caſes of different perſons, conſiderable diſparities, unknown to you, or unobſerved by you.

But when it is ever ſo clear, that the non-reſidence of miniſters ought to be allowed, it is at leaſt equally clear, that they ſhould uſe their beſt endeavours to make their people amends for it. One thing, proper to be done for this end, is relieving their poor: which as they could not with decency avoid doing, according to their ability, if they lived amongſt them, they ought to do more largely, if they live elſewhere. For no reproach will lie heavier on our order, than that of reaping all, and ſowing nothing; whereas, they who give alms in their abſence, will be in effect always preſent to one valuable purpoſe; will be readily preſumed to be well-wiſhers to their pariſhes in every way; whilſt they are benefactors to them in this way; and by ſuch a ſpecimen of the influence of religion upon themſelves, will remind their congregations, very acceptably, of the influence which it ought to have upon them; eſpecially if they make their charity more directly ſubſervient to religion, by affording diſtinguiſhed encouragement to pious and virtuous perſons, and thoſe who appear likely to be made ſuch; by procuring children to be inſtructed in their Chriſtian duty, and other proper knowledge; by diſtributing uſeful books amongſt the needy and ignorant. What is thus beſtowed, is of all the ſervice it can be: whereas injudicious bounty may even produce harm.

Another thing, incumbent on ſuch as cannot reſide conſtantly, is to inſpect, however, the ſtate of their pariſhes as frequently as they can: ſpending days, or weeks, or longer ſeaſons there occaſionally; and in proportion as their time is ſhorter, uſing more diligence in public and private inſtructions and warnings. For they are peculiarly bound to do what they are able, who are not able to do what elſe they ought. But if even this be out of their power, they may at leaſt be aſſiduous in getting informations from perſons of underſtanding and ſerioufneſs, in or near their cures, with what regularity, with what ſpirit and zeal, each part of the parochial duty is performed;

performed; whether true inward piety makes any progreſs; whether any or what abuſes and neglects are crept in. And he, who reckons it enough, that, for aught he knows to the contrary, his pariſhoners go on like their neighbours, hath by no means the requiſite concern for their ſouls, or his own.

But wherever abſence is neceſſary, or the largeneſs of a pariſh, or the infirmity of a miniſter, hinders him from taking the whole care of it perſonally, the principal point is, the choice of a fit ſubſtitute, to be employed in his ſtead, or ſhare his ſtead, or ſhare his burthen: for no ſuperintendency will make an unfit one anſwer the end. And therefore I charge it upon your conſciences, not to ſuffer cheapneſs, recommendations of friends, affection to this or that perſon or place of education, in ſhort, any inducement whatever, to weigh near ſo much with you, as the benefit of your people, in chuſing perſons to ſerve your churches. For on you the choice of them lies in the firſt place: but not on you alone. The laws of the church require, particularly Can. 48. that *no curate or miniſter be permitted to ſerve in any place, without examination and admiſſion of the ordinary:* in conſequence of which, one of the before-mentioned archiepiſcopal directions to the ſuffragans of the province, is this: *That you make diligent inquiry concerning Curates in your Dioceſe: and proceed to eccleſiaſtical cenſures againſt thoſe, who ſhall preſume to ſerve Cures, without being firſt duly licenſed thereunto; as alſo againſt all Incumbents, who ſhall receive and employ them without obtaining ſuch licence.* Yet I would avoid rigour in all caſes. The expence of a licence, by means of the ſtamps, may to ſome be rather inconvenient, and greater than the government perhaps intended: at leaſt, if they are likely to remove, and ſo repeat that expence, in a ſhort time. And ſuch curates I would excuſe; only deſiring them to conſider, what ſecurity of continuing in their ſtation, and receiving their ſalary, a licence brings them. But then you cannot think it right, that I ſhould be left in ignorance, who ſerves a church under my care, till I learn it by accident, or private inquiry, perhaps many months after; thro' which omiſſion, men of bad characters, men not in orders, may intrude; as there hath lately been a fragrant inſtance in this dioceſe. I am far from looking on the paſt failures of giving notice, as deſigned negligence of your flocks, or diſreſpect to your ſuperiors. But I

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ſhall have cauſe both to think of them and treat them as ſuch, if continued after the warning, which I now give, that no one is to officiate ſtatedly, or employ another to officiate ſo, within my juriſdiction, unleſs he firſt obtain my conſent; or what in effect will be mine, that of your very worthy and vigilant Archdeacon. Think not, I beg you, that this is taking more on myſelf, than my predeceſſors did. Their own directions prove, that they would have done the ſame thing, if they had ſeen the ſame neceſſity. Far be it from me to *lord it over God's heritage**, but I am bound to *keep that which is committed to my truſt* †.

When you want Curates, I recommend it to you, firſt to inquire after perſons of merit, already ordained, and if poſſible ordained prieſts, taking care to ſee their orders, as well as to examine into their characters, before you think of granting nominations to others. The number of clergymen indeed is rather deficient, than ſuperfluous. But ſtill one would not add to it by overlooking undeſervedly thoſe who are of it already. And particularly where help is wanted only for a ſhort time, I ſhall inſiſt on this point: nor will, without abſolute neceſſity, ordain any one upon ſuch a title. And if fraudulent titles are brought, merely to procure orders, as I hope I ſhall diſcover them ſoon enough to diſallow them, ſo I ſhall be ſure to remark and remember, who hath attempted to impoſe upon me by them.

The next thing to be conſidered in relation to Curates is, their teſtimonials. And here the canon and directions already quoted enjoin, that no Biſhop *admit ſuch as remove out of another Dioceſe to ſerve in his, without the teſtimony in writing of the Biſhop of that Dioceſe, or ordinary of the peculiar juriſdiction, from whence they come, of their good life, ability, and conformity to the eccleſiaſtical laws of the Church of England.* For the clergymen of one Dioceſe, or juriſdiction, at leaſt their hand-writing being uſually unknown to the Biſhop of another, he can ſeldom, of himſelf, be ſure, either that he hath their genuine teſtimony, or how far he may truſt it. Therefore it is fit, that he ſhould deſire the atteſtation of their proper ſuperior. And even to this it will be prudent to add ſuch further information as can be got: conſidering how very careleſsly

* 1 Pet. v. 3. † 1 Tim. vi. 20.

teſtimonials are ſometimes granted, even by reputable perſons.

But let me intreat you never to be guilty of ſuch careleſseſs yourſelves, for whatever purpoſe one is aſked of you. Both the nature of the thing, and the directions repeatedly mentioned, require, that no Biſhop *accept any letters teſtimonial, unleſs it be declared by thoſe who ſhall ſign them, that they have perſonally known*, not only the man, but *his life and converſation, for the time by them certified; and do believe in their conſcience, that he is qualified for that order, office or employment, which he deſires*. Now teſtimonials, concerning ſuch things as theſe, cannot be matter of mere form, unleſs our whole profeſſion be a very empty form. We, the Biſhops to whom they are given, do not, and muſt not, underſtand them to be ſo: it would be abſurd to demand them if we did. Some cuſtoms indeed may grow to be things of courſe: the reaſons for them ceaſing, or not being thought of moment; and yet the law for them continuing. But the reaſons for teſtimonials can never ceaſe, or be thought of ſmall moment. They are the only ordinary information that we have, in a caſe of the utmoſt importance, in which we have a right to be informed. For no one can imagine, that we are to ordain and employ whoever comes, or depend on clandeſtine intelligence. We muſt therefore, and do depend on regular teſtimonials. And if they be untrue, we are moſt injuriouſly deceived by them: and all the miſchiefs, that follow from thence, will ſit heavy one day on the deceivers. But, even excluſively of this great conſideration, would you be chargeable with declaring a deliberate falſehood under your hand? Would you have unworthy men fill eccleſiaſtical ſtations, and exclude their betters? Would you have your Biſhop reproached, and your order vilified, through your fault? If not; remember how utterly inconſiſtent with all concern for religion, with all veracity, probity, and prudence it is, to ſign teſtimonials at random; how lamentable a ſort of clergy it will produce; how dreadful an encouragement to wickedneſs and profaneneſs it will prove. Remember alſo, that you expreſs in theſe inſtruments, not what you charitably hope a perſon will be; but what you actually know he hath been: not what others tell you at the end of the time, for which you vouch; but what you have ſeen and heard through the courſe of it: ſo that, if for a conſiderable part of the

the three years, commonly ſpecified, you have ſeen and heard nothing of him, for that part you can certify nothing about him. And remember, laſtly, that though the affirmation of a perſon's having lived piouſly, ſoberly and honeſtly, comprehends a great deal, yet the concluding article, your belief of his fitneſs for what he deſires, implies a great deal more. For let him be ever ſo good, and even learned a man, he cannot be fit for a clergyman, and the care of a pariſh, without competent gravity and diſcretion, and a voice and a manner ſuitable to a public aſſembly: of all which things they, that have had ſome familiarity with him, are uſually the beſt, if not the only judges. This part of the teſtimonial therefore is highly neceſſary: and every part of it muſt be well conſidered, before it is given; and no regard paid to neighbourhood, acquaintance, friendſhip, compaſſion, importunity, when they ſtand in competition with truth.

It may ſometimes be hard for you to refuſe your hand to improper perſons. But it is only one of the many hardſhips, which conſcience bids men undergo reſolutely, when they are called to them. It would be much harder, that your Biſhop ſhould be miſled, the Church of God injured, and the poor wretch himſelf aſſiſted to invade ſacrilegiouſly an office, at the thought of which he hath cauſe to tremble. And if you fear he will be revenged on you for not yielding to him, this furniſhes an additional reaſon for denying him; for will you, or can you, ſay of ſuch a one, that he is qualified to be a miniſter of the goſpel any where? But if the perſons, to whom candidates apply, would only make it a rule to meet, and act jointly on the occaſion, and keep ſecret the particulars of what paſſed, it might be unknown, from whom the denial proceeded. Or ſuppoſe it known, the reſentment of ſuch, as deſerve to be refuſed, will ſeldom do a worthy man much hurt; and a number of ſuch refuſals will do the public unſpeakable good. Indeed the expectation of a refuſal's following upon wrong behaviour will in a great degree prevent ſuch behaviour, and turn this whole difficulty into a pleaſure. But what is unavoidable with innocence, muſt be virtuouſly borne; and inſtead of ſubmitting to recommend unfit perſons, you ought, if others recommend them, which God forbid, to interpoſe immediate cautions againſt the danger, in all flagrant caſes. Still, not every paſt fault, nor every preſent infirmity, ſhould be

alledged, or allowed, as an impediment. But into an office, the moſt important of all others, none ſhould be admitted, who are void of the proper Spirit, or a competent ſhare of the needful qualifications for it: and the leſs, becauſe, though we can refuſe to ordain them, we often cannot keep them back from very unſuitable ſtations, when once they are ordained.

After preſenting the title and teſtimonials, whether for orders, a curacy, or a living, follows the examination. For though the teſtimonial expreſſes an opinion, that the perſon is qualified; which may be very uſeful, to reſtrain ſuch from applying as are notoriouſly unqualified; yet we Biſhops muſt not, eſpecially in the caſe of orders, reſt on a mere opinion; but aſſure ourſelves by a cloſer trial, whether he hath ſufficient knowledge of religion and the holy ſcriptures to teach them in public, and apply them in private, and defend them againſt oppoſers: the two firſt of which are abſolutely neceſſary: the third, highly requiſite. As therefore, on the one hand, I hope I never have been or ſhall be over ſtrict in this reſpect, and rejecting candidates will give me almoſt, if not quite, as much concern, as it can give them: ſo, on the other, I muſt adhere to my duty, againſt all ſolicitation of friends, and all intreaties of the parties concerned, who little think what they do, when they preſs into ſuch an employment prematurely. I ſhow my regard to you, when I exclude unqualified perſons out of your number: and I ſhall never doubt your candid interpretation of my conduct; nor indeed your zeal to vindicate it, when you are acquainted with my reaſons, which any of you ſhall, who hath cauſe to aſk them. But that no injuſtice may be done to thoſe whom I poſtpone, any more than to myſelf: I beſeech you to conſider, and, if needful, to ſay in their behalf, that though deficient in knowledge, they may have a goodneſs of heart, more valuable than the higheſt knowledge: though not qualified yet, they may be ſoon; may already have made a good progreſs, though not a ſufficient one; may indeed have more learning on the whole, than many who are admitted, only not have applied themſelves enough to theological learning.

Examination muſt occaſionally be repeated after perſons have been ordained. The 39th canon requires it before inſtitution to benefices: therefore ſurely it is adviſable alſo before

fore admiſſion to curacies. A man, who was fit to be ordained, may yet have become ſince, through negligence, or bodily indiſpoſition affecting his mind, unfit to be employed: or he may be capable ſtill of what he was ordained for, but not of what he applies for: or his ordainer, though ever ſo duly careful, may ſometimes have miſtaken, or been miſinformed; and if he hath chanced to be too indulgent, the bad effects of his indulgence ought to be prevented. Accordingly re-examination is common. My brethren the biſhops, I am ſure, will not blame me for uſing it: and I truſt you, my brethren, will not.

When a curate nominated hath been examined and approved, the next ſtep is, to appoint him a ſalary. And here I am very ſenſible, that what is far from a comfortable maintenance for life, may however be a tolerable competency at firſt; and likewiſe, that ſome benefices are ſo mean, and ſome incumbents in ſuch low circumſtances, or burthened with ſo numerous families, that they muſt be excuſed, if they endeavour to get help on as eaſy terms as they well can. But if any miniſter, who hath either a large preferment, or two moderate ones, or a plentiful temporal income, tries to make a hard bargain with his brother, whom he employs; and is more ſolicitous to give the ſmalleſt ſalary poſſible, than to find the worthieſt perſon; it is matter of ſevere and juſt reproach; the friends of the clergy will be ſcandalized at it; their enemies will take dreadful advantages of it; indeed the people in general, if we think a trifle enough for him that doth the work, will be apt to conceive it very needleſs, that he, who doth little or nothing, ſhould have a great deal more. For this reaſon therefore, amongſt incomparably weightier ones, it concerns you much, both to labour diligently, and to allow liberally. Accordingly, I hope I ſhall never have the diſagreeable office thrown upon me of augmenting what is propoſed, but the ſatisfaction given me of confirming and applauding it.

But beſides making a reaſonable allowance, the miniſter of a pariſh ought to provide, with the kindeſt attention in all reſpects, for the convenience and accommodation, the credit and influence, of his curate; who is bound in return to conſult faithfully the miniſter's honour and intereſt in every thing; but above all, to be unwearied in that beſt proof of his gratitude,

titude, a conſcientious care of the ſouls committed to him; not proportioning his diligence to the poor recompence paid him here, but to the unſpeakable happineſs reſerved for good ſhepherds hereafter.

Indeed, whether the principal, or his repreſentative, or both, reſide, their induſtry and fervency and prudence will be the meaſure of their people's benefit, and their own final acceptance. If you content yourſelves with a languid formal recital of ſtated offices, and by indolence, or amuſements, or buſineſs, or even ſtudies, are loſt to your pariſhioners, while you are in the midſt of them, or by indiſcretions in converſation, dreſs, or demeanour, become diſliked or deſpiſed by them, you may, in reſpect of any ſpiritual uſefulneſs to them or yourſelves, be, almoſt as well, perhaps better, ever ſo far off. But this is no excuſe for being abſent, but only a reaſon for being preſent to good purpoſe. And as the non-reſidence of ſome, the unactive reſidence of others, and the offenſive conduct of a third ſort, (which cauſe great ſorrow, but moderate complaints amongſt wiſe and good people,) are favourite topics of invective againſt us, not only in the mouths of irreligious perſons, but of a new ſect pretending to the ſtricteſt piety; though we are bound always, we are peculiarly bound at preſent, to behave in ſo exemplary a manner, as will *cut off occaſion from them which deſire occaſion to glory* * of themſelves, and ſpeak evil of us. It is not *rendering* to them *railing for railing* †; it is not ridiculing them, eſpecially in terms bordering on profaneneſs, or affecting more gravely to hold them in contempt; it is not doing them the honour of miſcalling other perſons of more than ordinary ſerioufneſs by their name, that will prevent the continuance or the increaſe of the harm which they are doing. The only way is, for the clergy to imitate and emulate what is good in them, avoiding what is bad; to attend their cures, edify their pariſhioners with awakening, but rational and ſcriptural diſcourſes, converſe much with them, as *watchmen for their ſouls* ‡, *be ſober, grave, temperate, and ſhew themſelves in all things patterns of good works* §. If the people ſee, or but imagine, their miniſter unwilling to take more pains about them, or preſerve more guard

* 2 Cor. xi. 12.
† 1 Pet. iii. 9.
‡ Heb. xiii. 17.
§ Tit. ii. 2, 7.

guard upon himself than for shame he must, no wonder if it alienates them powerfully both from him and his doctrine: whereas when they perceive him careful to instruct them, and go before them, in whatever is their duty to do, they will hearken to him with great regard, when he cautions them against overdoing; and be unlikely to seek for imaginary improvements abroad from irregularities and extravagancies, whilst they experience themselves really improved at home in an orderly established method.

But then, to improve them effectually to their future happiness, as well as to silence false accusers, you must be assiduous in teaching the principles, not only of virtue and natural religion, but of the gospel: and of the gospel, not as almost explained away by modern refiners, but *as the truth is in Jesus**; as it is taught in the church, of which you are members; as you have engaged, by your subscriptions and declarations, that you will teach it yourselves. You must preach to them faith in the ever-blessed trinity; and vindicate, when it is requisite, those parts of our creeds and offices which relate to that article, from the very unjust imputations of absurdity and uncharitableness which have been cast upon them. You must set forth the original corruption of our nature; our redemption, *according to God's eternal purpose in Christ* †, by the sacrifice of the cross; our sanctification by the influences of the Divine Spirit; the insufficiency of our own good works, and the efficacy of faith to salvation: yet handling these points in a doctrinal, not controversial manner, unless particularly called to it; and even then treating adversaries with mildness and pity, not with bitterness or immoderate vehemence.

The truth, I fear, is, that many, if not most of us, have dwelt too little on these doctrines in our sermons: by no means, in general, from disbelieving or slighting them; but partly from knowing, that formerly they had been inculcated beyond their proportion, and even to the disparagement of Christian obedience; partly from fancying them so generally received and remembered, that little needs to be said, but on social obligations; partly again from not having studied theology deeply enough, to treat of them ably and beneficially: God

* Eph. iv. 21. † Eph. iii. 11.

God grant it may never have been for want of inwardly experiencing their importance. But whatever be the cauſe, the effect hath been lamentable. Our people have grown leſs and leſs mindful, firſt of the diſtinguiſhing articles of their creed, then, as will always be the caſe, of that one, which they hold in common with the Heathens; have forgot, in effect, their Creator, as well as their Redeemer and Sanctifier; ſeldom or never worſhipping him, or thinking of the ſtate of their ſouls in relation to him; but flattering themſelves, that what they are pleaſed to call a moral and harmleſs life, though far from being either, is the *one thing needful*. Reflections have been made upon us, of different natures, and with different views, on account of theſe things, by deiſts, by papiſts, by brethren of our own, which, it is eaſy to ſhow, have been much too ſevere. But the only complete vindication of ourſelves will be, to preach fully and frequently the doctrines which we are unjuſtly accuſed of caſting off or undervaluing: yet ſo, as to reſerve always a due ſhare of our diſcourſes, which, it is generally reported, ſome of our cenſures do not, for the common duties of common life, as did our Saviour and his apoſtles. But then, we muſt enforce them chiefly by motives peculiarly Chriſtian: I will not ſay, only by ſuch; for the ſcripture adds others. And while we urge on our hearers the neceſſity of univerſal holineſs, we muſt urge equally that of their *being found in Chriſt; not having their own righteouſneſs, which is of the law, but the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith* *.

Copious and intereſting as the ſubject is, I muſt now conclude. And *I beſeech you, brethren, ſuffer the word of exhortation* †: for I have ſpoken to you from the ſimplicity of a plain heart, and the ſincerity of a deep concern for the intereſts of the church of Chriſt, and the everlaſting welfare of every one of you; not as condemning, not as diſeſteeming you, very far from it, but as being *jealous over you with godly jealouſy*, and deeply affected with the preſent ſtate of religion amongſt us. Wickedneſs, profaneneſs, avowed infidelity, have made a dreadful progreſs in this nation. The civil power, in moſt caſes, doth little to check that progreſs: and it is an unhappineſs in our moſt happy conſtitution, that it cannot eaſily, if at all, do what

* Phil. iii. 9. † Heb. xiii. 22.

what one might wish. Ecclesiastical authority is not only too much limited, but too much despised, as matters now stand amongst us, to do almost any thing to purpose. In the small degree, that it can be exerted usefully I hope it will, and promise my utmost endeavours, in all cases notified to me, that it shall. But the main support of piety and morals consists in the parochial labours of the clergy. If our country is to be preserved from utter profligateness and ruin, it must be by our means: and, take notice, we cannot lose our influence, but in a great measure by our own fault. If we look on what we are apt to call our livings only as our livelihoods, and think of little more than living on the income of them according to our own inclinations; if, for want of *a good conscience, or faith unfeigned* *, we forfeit the protection of God; and by worldliness, or indolence, or levity in behaviour, talk, or appearance, (for gross vices I put out of the question) lose, as we assuredly shall, the reverence of mankind: there will be no foundation left for us to stand upon. Our legal establishment will shake and sink under us, if once it can be said we do the public little service; and much sooner if we are suspected of disquieting it. Wicked people will attack us without reserve; the good will be forced to condemn and give us up: and well would it be for us, if this were the worst. *It is a small thing to be judged of man's judgement: he that judgeth us is the Lord* †. But while we teach the genuine truths of the gospel, and evidently feel the truths we teach; and are more anxious about the souls of men, than our own profit, or pleasure, or power; while we submit ourselves dutifully and affectionately (as we never had greater cause) to the King and those who are put in authority under him: *lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty* ‡; and join to our piety and loyalty and virtue, but a common share of prudence: we shall, in spight of enemies, through his mercy, who hath promised to be *with us alway* ||, not fail of being upheld. The religious will *esteem us very highly in love for our work's sake* §: the *wise in their generation* ¶, though not religious, will perceive our importance: the vicious and destitute of principle will be awed by us; and the seed of the word, however tram-

* 1 Tim. i. 5. † 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. ‡ 1 Tim. ii. 2.
|| Mat. xxviii. § 1 Thess. v. 13. ¶ Luke xvi. 8.

pled under foot by ſome, will ſpring up and bear fruit in the hearts of many. Let us think then ſeriouſly, what depends us, what it requires of us, *and give ourſelves wholly to it**. God hath placed us in a ſtation of difficulty and labour, at preſent alſo of reproach and contempt from great numbers of men. But ſtill, if we only learn to value our function juſtly, and love it ſincerely, we ſhall be unſpeakably happier in diſcharging the duties of it, than we poſſibly can be in any thing elſe. The things in which the world places happineſs, are very trifles. We may plainly ſee them to be ſuch now, if we will; and we ſhall ſee in a little time, whether we will or not, that the only real point of moment is, to have approved ourſelves *good and faithful ſervants* † to our great Maſter. Let us all therefore bear in mind continually, how matters will appear to us then; and heartily pray and earneſtly endeavour, *ſo to paſs through things temporal, that we finally loſe not the things eternal, Grant this, O Heavenly Father, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, our Lord* ‡.

* 1 Tim. iv. 15. † Mat. xxv. 21. ‡ Col. 4th Sunday after Trinity.

A CHARGE

A

CHARGE

DISTRIBUTED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE

OF

CANTERBURY.

In the Year 1762,

The ARCHBISHOP being hindered by Illneſs from Viſiting them in Perſon.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

IT having pleaſed God that I ſhould live to come amongſt you a ſecond time, I think it my duty to proceed with the ſame kind of exhortations, which I gave you at firſt. For though many ſubjects of inſtruction might be proper, there is a peculiar propriety in thoſe, which relate more immediately to your conduct: and though I might very juſtly give you, in general, praiſe inſtead of advice, yet they who deſerve the moſt of the former, will be moſt deſirous of the latter, knowing how much need of it the beſt of us have. And I hope the freedoms which I ſhall take with you in this reſpect, will the rather be pardoned, as I both permit and intreat you to uſe the ſame with me, when occaſion requires it; being ſincerely

cerely diſpoſed, if I know myſelf, to ſet you an example of docility.

I began with your obligation to reſidence; and the appointment of curates, either to ſupply your abſence when you could not reſide, or to aſſiſt you when the work was too heavy for you. And then I entered a little into the common duties of incumbents and curates, in which I ſhall now make ſome further progreſs: more ſolicitous about the importance of directions, than the accuracy of method; and uſing no other apology, if I ſhould happen to repeat what I have given you in charge already, than that of the apoſtle: *To ſay the ſame things, to me is not grievous, and for you it is ſafe* *.

The ſame apoſtle's admonition to Timothy is, *Take heed unto thyſelf, and to thy doctrine* †. The main point is what he begins with, the care of our temper and behaviour. For without that, our preaching will ſeldom be ſuch as it ought, and ſcarce ever bring forth its proper fruits. Now, a Chriſtian temper conſiſts of various parts; but the firſt impreſſion, which a genuine faith in the goſpel makes on the ſoul, and the ruling principle, which it fixes there, is a deep ſenſe of love to God and our fellow-creatures, producing an earneſt deſire, that we and they may be for ever happy in his preſence. Whoever therefore is deſtitute of this feeling, ought not, though free from groſs vices, to become a clergyman: and without obtaining it from the giver of all good things by fervent prayer, no man is qualified to fill the place of one. For notwithſtanding that he may preſerve ſome *form of godlineſs*, without which he would be miſchievous and ſhocking in the higheſt degree; yet, not having the reality and *power thereof* ‡, he muſt profeſs, and ſeemingly attempt, to make others what he is far from being himſelf. Conſequently his endeavours out of the pulpit will be infrequent, reluctant, faint: and in it they will at beſt be unnatural and ungraceful, whatever pains he may take in his compoſitions, or whatever vehemence he may affect in his delivery. Hence he will be diſſatisfied within, detected and diſeſteemed by the judicious part of his hearers, and of little uſe to the reſt, if he is not even hurtful by miſleading them. Or whatever his caſe may be amongſt men, his inward want of the piety, which he outwardly pretends to, muſt render him uncom-

* Phil. iii. 1. † 1 Tim. iv. 16. ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 5.

uncommonly guilty in the ſight of God. Heaven forbid, that I ſhould have need to enlarge on ſuch a character in this audience.

But have we not moſt of us cauſe to apprehend, that our religious principles, though ſincere, are not ſufficiently exerted; and therefore produce not the fruit, which they might? Do we not rather take it for granted, that we approve ourſelves to be duly in earneſt, than find, on impartial examination that we do? No man ſhould raſhly ſay or ſurmiſe this of another; but every one ſhould ſearch home into it for himſelf. And we ſhould attentively read the ſcriptures, and the treatiſes written by wiſe and good men concerning the duties of God's miniſters; to ſee if we are ſuch as they deſcribe, and ſtir up ourſelves to become ſuch as we ought.

Good inclinations, thus excited, will not fail, through the aſſiſtance of divine grace, of directing us into a ſuitable conduct. And were a man, who confeſſedly means well, to overdo a little ſometimes, the rightneſs of his intention would plead his excuſe very ſtrongly. However we ſhould carefully avoid extremes, even on the better ſide: not give uncommanded demonſtrations of our Chriſtian zeal, when they will probably ſerve no good purpoſe, and be deemed oſtentation, or turned into ridicule, or provoke ill humour; but reſtrain, according as times and places and company may require, the ſentiments which elſe we could be glad to utter. Only we muſt do this in ſuch a manner, as not to tempt the moſt rigid profeſſor of religion to imagine, or the moſt profligate enemy of it to ſuggeſt, that we have little or none: but ſhow our concern for it on every fit occaſion, with full as much diligence, as we decline unfit ones. And here, I conceive, it is, that we of the clergy are chiefly apt to fail. We do not always appear in the common intercourſes of life, ſufficiently penetrated with the importance of our function, or ſufficiently aſſiduous to promote the ends of our miſſion.

Too poſſibly a great part of our people may like the lukewarm amongſt us the better for reſembling themſelves, and giving them no uneaſineſs on compariſon, but ſeeming to authoriſe their indifference. But then, ſuch of us can do them no good. Our example can teach them nothing beyond a little decent regularity, in which they will fancy they need not

quite

quite come up to us either. Our ſermons, and reading of prayers, they will conſider only as matters of form; and finding in us hardly any thing at other times, of what we expreſs at theſe, they will preſume, that our inward regard to it is not very great, and that they are not bound to have more. Therefore if they are pleaſed with us, if they eſteem us, while they continue to be of this turn, it muſt be for ſomething foreign from our office, ſomething of a middle, or it may be a blameable nature, not as teachers of the goſpel: a character which they take us to lay aſide as much as we well can. And ſo the better they think of us, the more lightly they will think of our miniſtry; till at length they join with thoſe avowed infidels, who boldly affirm, though often againſt their own conſciences, that we believe not what we preach, elſe it would have more influence upon us.

Then, at the ſame time, the right diſpoſitions of well inclined perſons will languiſh and decay, for want of that countenance and aſſiſtance in ſerious piety, which they ſhould receive from their paſtors. For if the tokens of our piety be confined to the church, they will be of little ſervice either out of it, or in it. Or if ſome good people ſuffer no harm themſelves from our defects, they will ſee with great ſorrow, that others do; all of them will be much readier to think the clerical order in general careleſs and light, if thoſe are ſo of whom they ſee moſt: their ears will be open to the invectives, which artful or heated men are daily pouring forth againſt us; they will eaſily be led to undervalue and miſconſtrue the beſt inſtructions of thoſe, with whom they are diſguſted; and run after any teachers, who have the powerful recommendation, for it will always, and no wonder, be a very powerful one, of ſeeming more in earneſt. The irregularities and diviſions which have prevailed ſo lamentably in our church of late, are greatly owing to an opinion, that we are uſually indifferent about vital inward religion. It is true, the ſpreaders of this imputation, which hath been monſtruouſly exaggerated, will have much to anſwer for: but ſo ſhall we alſo, unleſs we take the only way to ſilence it, by cutting off hereafter all occaſion for it.

Now, the firſt neceſſary ſtep to ſeem good is to be ſo; for mere pretence will be ſeen through; and the next is, to *let your light*

*light ſhine before men**, in the faithful and laborious exerciſe of your function. Living amongſt your pariſhioners, or as near them as may be: inquiring frequently and perſonally concerning the welfare and behaviour of thoſe, with whom you cannot be ſtatedly preſent; reverent and judicious reading of the prayers and leſſons in your churches, inſtructive and affecting ſermons delivered with diſcreet warmth, readineſs to take extraordinary pains for the occaſional aſſiſtance of your brethren, diligence in forming the youth to a ſenſe of their Chriſtian duty, in bringing your people to the holy communion, and where it can be, to week-day prayers: all theſe things will tend very much both to your uſefulneſs and your credit. Relieving or obtaining relief for ſuch as are diſtreſſed in their circumſtances: hearing your people willingly and patiently, though perhaps low in rank or weak in underſtanding, when they would conſult you upon any difficulty, and anſwering them with conſideration and tenderneſs: diſpoſing them to be viſited when ſick, praying by them with fervency, exhorting and comforting them with fidelity, compaſſion and prudence; and reminding them ſtrongly, yet mildly, after their recovery, of their good thoughts and purpoſes during their illneſs; will be further proofs, very beneficial and very engaging ones, of your ſerioufneſs: which however you muſt complete by going through every other office of religion with dignity. I will ſpecify two.

One is that of baptiſm: which, eſpecially when adminiſtered in private houſes without neceſſity, is too often treated, even during the adminiſtration, rather as an idle ceremony than a Chriſtian ſacrament: or however that be, is commonly cloſe followed by very unſuitable, if not otherwiſe alſo indecent, levity and jollity. Now in theſe circumſtances it is highly requiſite, that the miniſter ſhould, by a due mixture of gravity and judgment, ſupport the ſolemnity of the ordinance; and either prevent improprieties in the ſequel, or if it be doubtful whether he can, excuſe himſelf, with a civil intimation of the unfitneſs of them, from being preſent. The other inſtance is, that of ſaying grace over our daily food: which many, if not moſt, of the laiety have, with a profaneneſs more than heatheniſh, laid aſide: and I am ſorry to add, that ſome of

* Matth. v. 16.

of the clergy hurry it over ſo irreverently, in a mutter or a whiſper, ſcarce, if at all, intelligible, that one might queſtion, whether they had not better lay it aſide too, which yet God forbid, than make it thus inſignificant; and expoſe to contempt an act of devotion, and themſelves along with it, as doing what they are aſhamed of.

Indeed, far from authorizing any ſlights of this ſort by our example, and as it were our conſent, we muſt, through our whole converſation, ſteadily and reſolutely, though with mildneſs and modeſty, always keep up the honour of religion and our order, which is inſeparable from our own: never ſpeak a word, or uſe a geſture, which can with the leaſt colour be interpreted, as if we had ſmall regard to our profeſſion, or exerciſed it chiefly for a maintenance: never repeat, never hear, diſcourſes of an irreligious or immoral turn, without expreſſing a plain diſapprobation, briefly or at large, as the caſe may require: yet be on all occaſions courteous, and on proper occaſions cheerful; but let it be evidently the cheerfulneſs of ſerious men. *Fooliſh talking and jeſting are not convenient* *, not becoming any perſon: but thoſe leaſt of all, who ſhould know beſt, that *every idle word which men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an account thereof*, according to its tendency, *in the day of judgement* †. Unſeaſonable or exceſſive mirth ſits peculiarly ill upon him whoſe office muſt or ought to bring before his mind ſo frequently, the afflictions of this mortal ſtate, the holineſs of God's law, his own grievous imperfections, the deplorable ſins of many others, and the final ſentence, that awaits us all. Doubtleſs we ſhould endeavour to make religion agreeable; but not to make ourſelves agreeable, by leading our company to forget religion. We ſhould *every one of us pleaſe his neighbour for his good* ‡: but not ſo *pleaſe men*, as to fail in the character of *ſervants of Chriſt* §. We ſhould be *made*, in a fitting ſenſe and meaſure, *all things to all men, that we may by all means ſave ſome* ‖: but we ſhall loſe ourſelves, not ſave others, if we are quite different perſons in the pulpit and out of it: nor can we act a more incongruous part, than to chuſe raiſing and promoting the laugh for our province in converſation, inſtead of duly reſtraining our own liveline

† Eph. v. 4. † Matth. xii. 36. ‡ Rom. xv. 2.
§ Gal. i. 10. ‖ 1 Cor. ix. 22.

fineſs and that of others. *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh* *: and our hearts ought to abound with better things. I own, both affected and exceſſive reſtraint will do harm. But if we are ſincerely pious, and endeavour to be prudent, we ſhall combine uſeful informations and reflections with harmleſs entertainment: our *ſpeech will be with grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt, that we may know how we ought to anſwer every man* †: we ſhall prove that we have the end of our miniſtry conſtantly in view, by drawing profitable leſſons, frequently, but naturally, out of topics of indifference; and bringing back the diſcourſe, if it goes aſtray, from exceptionable or unſafe ſubjects, to innocent ones; yet if poſſible without offenſive reproof, and perhaps imperceptibly. *For the ſervants of the Lord muſt not ſtrive*, that is, roughly and harſhly, *but be gentle unto all men* ‡, even the worſt. Yet, on the other hand, ſervile obſequiouſneſs, or *flattering words* §, even to the beſt, are far remote from *having our converſation in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity* ||.

Talking with great earneſtneſs about worldly affairs, or with great delight about diverſions and trifles, betrays a mind over-much ſet upon them: and numbers will repreſent the caſe as worſe than it is. Nay, our being only in a very peculiar degree good judges of ſuch matters, or of any that are unconnected with our office, will, unleſs we have ſome eſpecial call to them, be commonly thought to imply, that we have ſtudied and love them beyond what we ought, to the neglect of our proper buſineſs. For we are not to expect very favourable conſtructions from mankind: yet it greatly imports us to have their good opinion; which we ſhall not ſecure, unleſs, in whatever other lights they may ſee us occaſionally, the worthy clergyman be the predominant part of our character. If practical Chriſtian piety and benevolence and ſelf government, with conſtant zeal to promote them all upon earth, are not the firſt and chief qualities, which your pariſhioners and acquaintance will aſcribe to you; if they will ſpeak of you, as noted on other accounts, but paſs over theſe articles; and when aſked about them, be at a loſs what to ſay, excepting poſſibly that they know no harm of you; all is not

* Matth. xii. 34. † Col. iv. 6. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 24.
§ 1 Theſſ. ii. 5. || 2 Cor. i. 12.

right: nor can ſuch a clergy anſwer the deſign of its inſtitution any where; or even maintain its ground in a country of freedom and learning, though a yet worſe may in the midſt of ſlavery and ignorance.

Actually ſharing in the gaieties and amuſements of the world will provoke cenſure ſtill more, than making them favourite ſubjects of diſcourſe. I do not ſay, that recreations, lawful in themſelves, are unlawful to us: or that thoſe which have been formerly prohibited by eccleſiaſtical rules, merely as diſreputable, may not ceaſe to be ſo by change of cuſtom. But ſtill *not all things lawful are expedient* *, and certainly theſe things, further than they are in truth requiſite for health of body, refreſhment of mind, or ſome really valuable purpoſe, are all a miſemployment of our leiſure hours, which we ought to ſet our people a pattern of filling up well. A miniſter of God's word, attentive to his duty, will neither have leiſure for ſuch diſſipations, public or domeſtic, nor liking to them. He will ſee, that pleaſure, or rather a wretched affectation of it, is become the idol of mankind; to which they are ſacrificing their fortunes, their families, their healths, their reputations, their regard to God, to their ſocial duties, to the ſtate of their ſouls, to their future being. Now what are the clergy to do in this caſe? If we but ſeem to go along with them, who ſhall call them back? For as to the pretence of keeping them within bounds by our preſence, it is viſibly a mere pretence. Or were it not, the older and graver of us would ſurely think ſuch a ſuperintendency no very honourable one: and few of the younger and livelier could be ſafely truſted with it. Indeed we none of us know, into what improprieties of behaviour, at leaſt what wrongneſs of diſpoſition we may be drawn by the *evil communications* of theſe aſſemblies: whether, if happily they ſhould not otherwiſe *corrupt* our *good manners* †, we may not however grow inwardly fond of them; come to think our profeſſion a dull one, and the calls of it troubleſome; throw off as much of the burthen as we can, and perform with reluctance and cold formality the remainder, which we muſt.

At leaſt it will be ſuſpected, that we cannot greatly diſapprove the cuſtoms in which we voluntarily join, the perſons with

* 1 Cor. vi. 12. † 1 Cor. xv. 33.

with whom we familiarly aſſociate, or indeed any thing ſaid or done where we delight to be: that if we do not go the utmoſt lengths, yet we ſhould, if for ſhame we durſt: for theſe things are our choice, not the duties of our miniſtry; which therefore declaimers will ſay we are not ſincere in, or, however, unfit for. And even they, who plead our example as a precedent for themſelves, will uſually honour us much the leſs for ſetting it.

Still I do not mean, that we ſhould be ſour and moroſe; condemn innocent relaxations, and provoke men to ſay, that we rail out of envy at what we have abſurdly tied up ourſelves from partaking of: but expreſs our diſlike of them as mildly as the caſe will bear; ſlight with good humour the indulgences, in which others falſely place their happineſs; and convince them by our experience as well as reaſoning, how very comfortably they may live without them. It is true, paying court to the gay and inconſiderate by imitation of them, may often be the ſhorter, and ſometimes the ſurer way to their favour. But the favour of the faſhionable world is not our aim: if it be, we have choſen our profeſſion very unwiſely. And though we ſhould ſucceed thus with ſuch perſons in point of intereſt, we muſt not hope even for their eſteem. For they will both think and ſpeak with the loweſt contempt of the complying wretch, whom yet for their own convenience or humour they will careſs, and now and then prefer.

Our predeceſſors, that their abſtaining from indiſcreet levities might be notorious, wore conſtantly the peculiar habit of their order. And certainly we ſhould be more reſpected, if we followed their example in this more univerſally. They complained of no inconveniencies from it: nor did I ever, in a courſe of many years, find any worth naming. In the primitive and perſecuting times indeed clergymen wore no peculiar dreſs: and long after were diſtinguiſhed only by retaining a greater ſimplicity of garb than others. But gradually ſuperiors diſcerned reaſons for enjoining a different ſort: and ſurely others may well pay them ſo far the obedience promiſed to them, as always to ſhow, by ſome evident and proper marks, (for nothing more is expected) of what claſs of men they are. If you do not, it will be ſaid, either that you are aſhamed of your cauſe, or conſcious of your unſkilfulneſs

to defend it, or that you conceal yourſelves to take occaſionally unfit liberties. Indeed ſome external reſtraints of this kind, merely as an admonition againſt unſeemly diſcourſe and conduct and company, would, though not preſcribed, be very adviſable for young clergymen: among whom they, who diſlike them the moſt, might ſometimes perceive, that they have the moſt need of them. And we that are older, ſhould keep up the cuſtom for their ſakes, though unneceſſary for our own. Beſides, we may all prevent, by ſuch notification of ourſelves, a great deal of unbecoming talk and deportment in others: and ſo eſcape both the diſagreeableneſs of reproving it, and the impropriety of not reproving it. Or if after all it cannot be prevented, they who are offended with it, will immediately ſee in us a refuge from it.

But then a habit, viſibly a clergyman's, muſt be ſuch in every part as befits a clergyman; have no look of effeminacy or love of finery in it *. For we had better put on the lay dreſs intirely, than diſgrace the clerical one. And it is doubly contemptible, firſt to ſhow what a fondneſs we have for things utterly beneath us, and then how poorly we are able to indulge it. Therefore let us be uniform: and as our character is a truly venerable one, let us think we do ourſelves honour by wearing the ancient badges of it. I need not add, that our whole demeanour ſhould be anſwerable to our cloathing: that ſoftneſs and delicacy of manner, ſkill in the ſcience of eating †, and the perfection of liquors, in ſhort, every approach to luxurious gratification, is ſtrangely out of place in one, who hath devoted himſelf to *endure hardneſs as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt* ‡.

Still we ought to judge very charitably of thoſe, who take greater liberties than we dare: never blame them more, ſeldom ſo much, as they deſerve; and confine our ſeverity to our own practice. Only we muſt watch with moderate ſtrictneſs over our families alſo: not only keeping up the joint and ſeparate worſhip of God in them, which I hope no clergyman omits, but forming them to every part of piety and virtue and prudence. St Paul requires, that not only *Deacons*, but their *wives* be *grave* ||: and that the higher clergy be ſuch, as *rule well their own houſes, having their children in ſubjection with all*

* Hieron. ad Nepotian. § 9.
† Hieron. ad Nepotian. § 6.
‡ 2 Tim. ii. 3.
|| 1 Tim. iii. 8, 11.

*all gravity: for if a man know not how to rule his own houſe, how ſhall he take care of the Church of God**? Whence we have all promiſed at our ordination, to *frame and faſhion our families*, together with ourſelves, *according to the doctrine of Chriſt, and to make them, as much as in us lieth, wholeſome examples and patterns to his flock.* They are naturally the firſt objects of our care: we have peculiar opportunities of inſtructing and reſtraining them. If we neglect them, we ſhall never be thought to have much concern for others: if we are unſucceſsful with them, we ſhall be deemed very unſkilful; and bid to look at home before we reprove the reſt of our flock. But exhibiting inſtances of goodneſs and happineſs, produced under our own roofs, by the methods to which we direct thoſe around us, muſt needs add ſingular weight to our exhortations.

For the importance of the rules hitherto laid down, we have the judgment of a moſt able and ſubtle and determined enemy, the Emperor Julian: who, deſigning to re-eſtabliſh paganiſm, and accounting, as he declares, the ſtrictneſs and ſanctity, profeſſed by Chriſtians, to be a principal cauſe of the prevalence of their faith, in two of his epiſtles gives directions, undoubtedly copied from the injunctions obſerved by the clergy of thoſe days, that the heathen prieſts be men of ſerious tempers and deportment; that they neither utter, nor hear, nor read, nor think of any thing licentious or indecent; that they baniſh far from them all offenſive jeſts and libertine converſation: be neither expenſive nor ſhowiſh in their apparel; go to no entertainments but ſuch as are made by the worthieſt perſons; frequent no taverns; appear but ſeldom in places of concourſe; never be ſeen at the public games and ſpectacles; and take care that their wives and children and ſervants be pious, as well as themſelves †. Let not, I intreat you, this apoſtate put us to ſhame.

But clergymen, who are ſerious in their whole behaviour, and the care of their families alſo, are often too unactive amongſt their people: apt to think, that if they perform regularly the ordinary offices of the church, exhort from the pulpit ſuch as will come to hear them, and anſwer the common occaſional calls of parochial duty, they have done as much as they

* 1 Tim. v. 4, 5.

† Ep. 49. ad Arſac. p. 430, 431. Fragm. Ep. p. 301,—305.

they need, or well can, and ſo turn themſelves to other matters: perhaps never viſit ſome of their pariſhioners; and with the reſt enter only into the ſame ſort of talk, that any one elſe would do. Now, St Paul ſaith, he *taught* the Epheſians both *publicly and from houſe to houſe, teſtifying repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* *; and *ceaſed not to warn every one day and night*†. He alſo commands Timothy to *preach the word*, and *be inſtant, in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon*‡; at ſtated times and others: not forcing advice upon perſons, when it was likelier to do harm than good: but prudently improving leſs favourable opportunities, if no others offered. Thus unqueſtionably ſhould we do. And a chief reaſon, why we have ſo little hold upon our people is, that we converſe with them ſo little, as watchmen over their ſouls. The paſtors of the foreign proteſtants outdo us greatly in this reſpect, and are honoured in proportion. The Romiſh prieſts have their laity under their hands, on one account or another, almoſt continually, and acquire by it an abſolute dominion over them. Both the old diſſenters from our church, and thoſe who are now forming new ſeparations, gain and preſerve a ſurpriſing influence amongſt their followers by perſonal religious intercourſe. Why ſhould not we learn from them? At firſt ſuch applications may, by diſuſe, appear ſtrange; and have both their difficulties and their dangers. But the moſt apprehenſive of them will be the ſafeſt from them: and all will improve their talents by practice. On young perſons you will be able to make good impreſſions by diſcourſe with them before confirmation: theſe may be renewed in private exhortations afterwards to receive the ſacrament: and the ſpiritual acquaintance, thus begun, may be continued ever after. Other means may be found with grown perſons: on the firſt ſettling of a family in your pariſh; on occaſion of any great ſickneſs, or affliction, or mercy; on many others, if you ſeek for them, and engage worthy friends to aſſiſt you. Even common converſation may be led very naturally to points of piety and morals; and numbers be thus induced to reading proper books, to public, to private, to family devotion, to ſobriety, juſtice, alms-giving and Chriſtian love. When once you are well got into the method, you will proceed with eaſe and applauſe; provided

* Acts xx. 20, 21. † Verſe 31. ‡ 2 Tim. iv. 2.

provided your whole character and conduct be conſiſtent, elſe you will fall into total diſgrace; and particularly provided you convince your pariſhioners, that you *ſeek, not theirs, but them* *.

A due meaſure of diſintereſtedneſs is one main requiſite for the ſucceſs of a clergyman's labours. You will therefore avoid all mean attentions to ſmall matters: never be rigorous in your demands of them; never engage in any diſputes about them, unleſs a part of your income, too large to be given up, depends upon them. In all diſputes you will prefer diſcreet references to proceedings at law: and when the latter become neceſſary, carry them on in the faireſt, the leaſt expenſive, the friendlieſt manner. You will be very tender in your demands upon the poor, and very equitable towards the rich; though you will conſcientiouſly preſerve all the material rights, with which you are intruſted, for your ſucceſſors. If you find room and reaſon to improve your income, you will do it within bounds: and prove, that no wrong motive induces you to it, by living with decent frugality, providing for your families with moderation, and going as far as ever you are able in acts of good-natured, and eſpecially of pious liberality; which are the moſt valuable in themſelves, the moſt incumbent on you, and the moſt overlooked by others. For nothing gives greater or juſter offence, than to ſee a clergyman intent upon hoarding, or luxurious, or ſplendid, inſtead of being charitable.

Few indeed of our order have much to ſpare: and many have cauſe to wiſh for a more plentiful ſubſiſtence. Yet even theſe, and much more the better preferred, if they are earneſt ſeekers and importunate ſolicitors for promotion, lower their characters grievouſly; and ſuch as uſe indirect means to obtain it, are often providentially diſappointed; or though they ſucceed, always diſhonour themſelves, and never do much good to others: whereas the loweſt of their brethren will be juſtly reſpected, and may be highly uſeful, if he ſubmits contentedly to God's good providence, and labours to lie within the compaſs of his income; exceeding which, without viſible neceſſity, will bring ſome imputations even upon him, and

* 2 Cor. xii. 14.

and deſervedly a much heavier on ſuch as enjoy an ampler proviſion.

However inoffenſive we are, we muſt expect to receive, from time to time, injurious and provoking treatment, as the ſcripture hath forewarned us. We ſhall hurt both our own cauſe and that of religion dreadfully, if we return it; and do honour to both, if we behave under it calmly, *with* ſuch *meekneſs of wiſdom* *, as may tend to bring our adverſaries over, if not to our ſentiments concerning the matter in queſtion, whatever it be, yet to a good opinion of our meaning and temper; or may at leaſt, if we fail of ſucceſs with them, engage more impartial perſons to countenance and protect us. Indeed we ought, if poſſible, to keep not only ourſelves, but others, out of all angry conteſts. We ſolemnly promiſed at our ordination, to *maintain and ſet forwards, as much as lieth in us, quietneſs, peace and love among all Chriſtian people, and eſpecially among them that are or ſhall be committed to our charge:* and by ſo doing we are bound never to raiſe or foment perſonal, family, parochial, political, or eccleſiaſtical animoſities, but do all in our power to compoſe and extinguiſh them; nor will any thing conduce more to our credit or to our uſefulneſs. The political party-ſpirit is, God be thanked, of late years much abated. Let us guard againſt the return of it; ſhow, in word and deed, becoming reſpect, as we have great cauſe, to our excellent king, and all who are put in authority under him: *not exerciſe ourſelves in matters too high for us* †, but *be quiet and do our own buſineſs* ‡; *let our moderation*, even where we are concerned to meddle, *be known unto all men* §, exerciſing it even to thoſe who have leaſt of it; and always remember, that neither patriot love to our earthly country, nor loyal attachment to our earthly ſovereign, will be accepted by our heavenly Father, without uniform obedience to the whole of his goſpel.

Another point of great importance to clergymen is, that they be ſtudious. This will keep your money from being ſpent unwiſely; and likewiſe your time from being thrown away hurtfully or unprofitably, or hanging heavy on your hands. It will procure you reverence too, as perſons of knowledge; whereas the idle will, even by the ignorant, be thought deficient,

* Jam. iii. 13. † Pſal. cxxx. 2. ‡ 1 Theſſ. iv. 11. § Phil. iv. 4.

deficient. And, which is the main thing, this alone will enable you to understand the business of your station, and perform it well. But then you must apply to such things chiefly, as will fit you most to answer the great end of your employment; and *determine*, with St Paul, *to know nothing*, comparatively speaking, amongst your people, *save Christ Jesus and him crucified* *. The concern of a parish minister is, to make the lowest of his congregation apprehend the doctrine of salvation by repentance, faith and obedience; and to labour, that when they know the way of life, they may walk in it. If he doth not these things for them, he doth nothing; and it requires much consideration to find out the proper methods of doing them, and much pains and patience to try one after another. Smooth discourses, composed partly in flowing sentences which they cannot follow to the end; containing little that awakens their drowsy attention, little that inforces on them plainly and home what they must do to be saved; leave them as ignorant and unreformed as ever, and only lull them into a fatal security. Therefore bring yourselves down to their level; for what suits the meanest Christian will suit the highest: examine if they take in what you say, and change the form of it till they do. This I recommend for your first study; and be assured, you will improve yourselves by it no less than your hearers. But so far as you have opportunity consistently with this, apply to any part of science, to every part you can, that is connected with your profession: only learn, by weighing carefully the judgements and reasonings of others, to think modestly of yourselves: avoid, in the outset of your inquiries more especially, drawing hasty conclusions; be at least as much on your guard against fondness of new opinions, as prepossession for established doctrines; and beware of being misled, either by the positiveness of vehement writers, or the false colours of artful ones.

You will doubtless cultivate peculiarly those branches of knowledge, which the circumstances of the times, or of your parishes, peculiarly point out to you. God hath permitted us, for our sins, to be attacked, in a remarkable degree, by infidels on one hand, and by maintainers of innumerable strange

* 1 Cor. ii. 2.

notions on the other. And we have need, that every one, who is able to qualify himſelf well, ſhould aſſiſt in defending his part of the common cauſe. For there are too many unanſwered books abroad in the world, and more appearing daily, written againſt Chriſtianity and morals, and the doctrines of our church. Nor have we of the clergy, for ſome time paſt, borne ſo large a ſhare, comparatively with perſons of other communions, in vindicating what we teach, as might be expected from us. I hope you are not often obliged, in this Dioceſe, to encounter unbelievers from the pulpit; and you will certainly not chuſe to alarm your people, by refuting, in form, objections to which they are ſtrangers; though it may be uſeful to obviate them briefly, and if poſſible without naming them. But as, probably enough, ſome of you will, at one time or another, in company meet with ſuch perſons, or hear of their talk, I would give you a few directions in relation to them.

If any of them are virtuous in their conduct, and backward to offend in diſcourſe, they ſhould not be unſeaſonably provoked, but treated with reſpect. If any of them build their unbelief on ſerious argument, which plainly very few do, they ſhould be directed to the books, or the learned men, that are beſt fitted to anſwer them; and the leſs able ſhould prepare for combat with them, but not engage too far in it prematurely. If they cannot at preſent be convinced of the falſehood of their tenets, they ſhould be ſhown however, in a gentle manner, the pernicious effects of promulging them. But if they will obſtinately perſiſt to ſacrifice every thing valuable amongſt men to their own vices, or their own vanity, we muſt openly withſtand them, and warn others againſt them. Yet even this ought to be done without paſſion or bitterneſs, otherwiſe all the blame will be laid on us; eſpecially without perſonal incivilities, even to the worſt of them, elſe they will become ſtill worſe than they were. But then we muſt never aſſiſt the very beſt of them in gaining influence and growing dangerous; nor bring our own ſincerity into queſtion by intimacies with them, which they will uſually repreſent, and ſometimes believe, to proceed from our inwardly thinking as they do. Much leſs ſhould we ever condeſcend to the ſhocking meanneſs of paying court for private ends, either to them, or to wicked wretches of any kind, though not infidels; but

connect

connect ourſelves with worthy perſons; engage their ſupport, and excite their endeavours to repreſs profaneneſs and immorality.

It is peculiarly unhappy, that while we are employed on one ſide in defending the goſpel, we are accuſed on another of corrupting it. I have not now in my view either the Church of Rome, or the Proteſtants who broke off from us a century ago. The methods of dealing with both have been long ſince preſcribed, and I repeat them not; but intreat your attention to the movements of each, eſpecially the former, if you have any of them in your pariſhes. But I mean to ſpeak of perſons riſen up in our own times, and profeſſing the ſtricteſt piety: who vehemently charge us with departing from the doctrines, and ſlighting the precepts of our religion; but have indeed themſelves advanced unjuſtifiable notions, as neceſſary truths; giving good people groundleſs fears, and bad ones groundleſs hopes; diſturbed the underſtandings of ſome, impaired the circumſtances of others; prejudiced multitudes againſt their proper miniſters, and prevented their edification by them; produced firſt diſorders in our churches, then partial or total ſeparations from them; and ſet up unauthorized teachers in their aſſemblies. Where theſe irregularities will end, God only knows; but it behoves us to be very careful, that they make no progreſs through our fault.

Now, it would not only be injurious, but profane, to brand, with an opprobrious name, Chriſtians remarkably ſerious, merely for being ſuch; and equally imprudent to diſclaim them as not belonging to us, to let a ſect gain the credit of them, and labour to drive them into it. Surely we ſhould take, even were they wavering, or actually gone from us, the moſt reſpectful and perſuaſive means of recalling ſuch, and fixing them with us. Nay, ſuppoſing any perſons irrecoverably gone, we ſhould not be haſty to condemn, even in our thoughts, either them or their party, as enthuſiaſts or hypocrites: *whatſoever they are, it maketh no matter to us**. And much leſs ought we to ſay of either worſe than we are ſure they deſerve. When we are undoubtedly well informed of any extravagant things, which they have aſſerted or done, it may be uſeful to ſpeak ſtrongly of them; but not with anger

* Gal. ii. 6.

and exaggeration; which will only give them a handle to cenſure our uncharitableneſs, and confute us; but with deep concern, that when ſo few perſons expreſs any zeal for the goſpel, ſo many of thoſe, who do run into extremes, that hurt its intereſts. Nor will ridicule become our character, or ſerve our cauſe better than invective. It may pleaſe thoſe very highly, who are in no danger of being profelyted by them. But what ſhall we get by that? Perſons negligent of religion will at the ſame time be confirmed in their negligence; and think, that all they need to avoid is being *righteous overmuch**. Tender minds will be grieved and wounded by ſuch ill-placed levity; and crafty declaimers will rail at us with ſucceſs, as *ſcoffers*†, *denying the power of godlineſs*‡. But if we let fall any light expreſſions, that can be wreſted into a ſeeming diſreſpect to any ſcripture doctrine or phraſe, we ſhall give our adverſaries unſpeakable advantages; and they have ſhown, that they will uſe them without mercy or equity. Therefore we muſt guard every word that we utter, againſt miſrepreſentations: be ſure to expreſs, in public and private, our firm belief of whatever evangelical truths border upon their miſtakes; and certainly be as vigilant over our behaviour, as our teaching; encourage no violence, no rudeneſs towards them; but recommend ourſelves to them by our mildneſs, our ſerioufneſs, our diligence; honour thoſe who are truly devout and virtuous amongſt them, much more on that account, than we blame them for being injudicious, and hard to pleaſe; and be full as ready to acknowledge the good they have done, as to complain of the harm; yet beware, and counſel others to beware, of being drawn, by eſteem of their piety, into reliſhing their ſingularities, and patronizing their ſchiſm.

Acting thus, we ſhall not only *cut off occaſion from thoſe who deſire occaſion*‖ to ſpeak evil of us, and be able to remonſtrate with authority and effect againſt their exceſſes and wildneſſes; but, which is the chief point, we ſhall become better miniſters of Chriſt for their harſh treatment of us. And we ſhould always labour, that every thing may have this influence upon us: think with ourſelves, if others go too far, whether we do not fall ſhort; aſk our conſciences, whether the ſmall ſucceſs of our endeavours be, in truth, as it ought, a heavy

* Eccl. vii. 16. † 2 Pet. iii. 3. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 15. ‖ 2 Cor. xi. 12.

heavy grief to us; whether we have carefully ſearched out, and try inceſſantly to overcome the difficulties that lie in our way to making them better. Theſe things, if we are in earneſt, we ſhall chiefly have at heart; and if we are not in earneſt, *we are of all men* the moſt guilty, and *the moſt miſerable**.

In giving you my advice thus largely and freely on theſe ſeveral heads, I no more ſuppoſe you culpable in relation to any of them, than you do your pariſhioners, when you exhort them to any particular duties, or warn them againſt particular ſins. On the contrary, to uſe the apoſtle's words, *I am perſuaded of you, brethren, that ye are full of goodneſs, repleniſhed with all knowledge, able alſo to admoniſh one another. Nevertheleſs*, if I may preſume to adopt, with due abatements, the ſubſequent words alſo, *I have* ſpoken *ſomewhat boldly unto you in part, as putting you in mind, becauſe of the grace which is given me of God, that I ſhould be the miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt to you*†, as you are to your reſpective congregations. And let us all pray for ourſelves and each other daily, that we may ſo *feed the flock of God which is among us, and be enſamples to it, that when the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, we may receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away*‡.

* 1 Cor. xv. 19. † Rom. xv. 14,—16. ‡ 1 Pet. v. 2,—4.

A CHARGE

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE

OF

CANTERBURY,

In the Year 1766.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

HAVING diſtributed amongſt you, above three years ago, when ſickneſs prevented me from viſiting you in perſon, a printed diſcourſe, in which I exhorted you, as St Paul did Timothy, to *take heed unto yourſelves*; I proceed now to add, as he did, *and to your doctrine**.

To inſtruct perſons in religion is the leading part of a clergyman's duty. And though he will do it in a very uſeful degree by the example of a Chriſtian behaviour on all occaſions; yet he will do it more eſpecially in the peculiar diſcharge of his office. When he is only to uſe the forms preſcribed him, he may, by uſing them with due reverence and propriety, greatly promote both knowledge and pious diſpoſitions in his hearers. Therefore we ought to watch diligently over ourſelves in this reſpect; and then it will be eaſier

* 1 Tim. iv. 16.

eaſier to convince our people, that they may and ſhould learn a great deal from the exhortations, the prayers, the praiſes, the portions of ſcripture, of which our liturgy conſiſts; that therefore, even when there is no other ſervice, they ſhould come to church for the ſake of theſe far more conſtantly, and attend to them far more carefully, than the generality of them do; indeed ſhould have them in much higher eſteem, than the mere products of our private thoughts.

But I ſhall confine myſelf to the inſtructions, which you give of your own; ſpeaking of them chiefly with a view of ſuggeſting ſuch advice to the younger part of you, as I hope the elder will approve, and enforce.

And here I muſt begin with repeating, what I need not enlarge upon, for I have done it already, that the foundation of every thing in our profeſſion is true piety within our breaſts, prompting us to excite it in others. Even heathens made it a rule, that an orator, if he would perſuade, muſt be a good man: much more muſt a preacher. When a bad one utters Divine truths, we ſhut our ears, we feel indignation. Form yourſelves therefore thoroughly, by devout meditations, and fervent prayer, to ſerioufneſs of heart, and zeal for the eternal welfare of ſouls: for then every thing elſe, that you are to do, will follow of courſe.

You will earneſtly labour to complete yourſelves in all proper knowledge: not merely the introductory kinds, which unhappily are often almoſt the only ones, taught the candidates for holy orders; but thoſe chiefly, which have a cloſer connection with your work. And though, amongſt theſe, the ſcience of morals and natural religion is highly to be valued, yet the doctrines and precepts of the goſpel require your principal regard beyond all compariſon. It is of the goſpel, that you are miniſters; all other learning will leave you eſſentially unqualified; and this alone comprehends every thing, that is neceſſary. Without it, you will never *approve yourſelves to God, as workmen that need not to be aſhamed* *, nor *make* your hearers *wiſe unto ſalvation* †. Therefore you muſt diligently peruſe the holy ſcriptures, and as much as you can of them in the original; *that*, as the office of ordination expreſſes it, *by daily reading and weighing of them ye may wax riper and ſtronger*

* 2 Tim. ii. 15. † 2 Tim. iii. 15.

ſtronger in your miniſtry. And you muſt not grudge the expence, which may ſurely be well ſpared in ſome other things, of procuring according to your abilities, the aſſiſtance, both of ſuch commentators, as will beſt ſhow you the true ſenſe of holy writ; and of ſuch alſo, as will beſt direct you, how to draw from it needful inſtructions. General ſyſtems of theology, and particular treatiſes on points of moment, will enlarge your ſtock of matter; and the moſt noted ſermons will be patterns to you of compoſition.

For I ſuppoſe the diſcourſes, even of thoſe who have the loweſt qualifications, to be, in a great meaſure at leaſt, of their own compoſition. Elſe they will ſeldom either ſufficiently ſuit the congregation to which they are delivered, or be delivered in the manner which they ought. Beſides, if perſons decline that of fitting themſelves in other ways for parochial uſefulneſs, and throw away their time unwiſely, if not worſe; that will ſoon be obſerved to their diſadvantage; and if once it be ſuſpected, that through incapacity or idleneſs they ſteal what they preach, they will have ſmall influence, if any. I do not mean, that no uſe ought to be made of the labours of others: for indeed I have made no little uſe of them in what I am ſaying, and about to ſay. I would have young clergymen eſpecially, make very great uſe of the works of able divines: not inconſiderately and ſervilely tranſcribe them; but ſtudy, digeſt, contract, amplify, vary, adapt to their purpoſe, improve, if poſſible, what they find in them. For thus it will fairly become their own; mix naturally with what proceeds altogether from themſelves; and preſerve their youthful productions from the imputation of being empty and jejune. In the choice of ſuch authors you will conſult religious and judicious friends, always joining your own experience. Thoſe writers, whom you find the moſt effectual to enlighten your underſtandings, convince you of your faults, animate you to good reſolutions, and guide and ſupport you in the execution of them, will beſt help you to produce the ſame effect on others. Theſe therefore imitate: but with judgment. If, amidſt their excellencies, you obſerve miſtakes, defects, redundancies, flights indiſcreetly high, deſpicably familiar condeſcenſions, ſallies over-vehement; beware of adopting any of them. And remember too that a very cloſe imitation, of

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ſingularities above all, will both betray you, and be diſguſtful.

When you go about to prepare an inſtruction for your people, firſt conſider carefully of a proper ſubject and text: begging God to direct your choice, and diſpoſe you to treat them in a proper way. Chuſing a text, without need, that will ſurpriſe, or a ſeemingly barren one, to ſhow what your art can extract from it, will appear ingenious perhaps to ſome, but vanity to moſt with good reaſon. Chuſing one, that requires much accommodating to your purpoſe, is but miſpending pains and time: and ſo is labouring to clear up a very obſcure one, unleſs it be of great importance. And giving a new tranſlation or ſenſe of a text, unleſs the preſent hath conſiderable inconveniences, will only puzzle your audience, and tempt them to doubt, whether they underſtand the reſt of their bible. Such a text is moſt convenient, as will branch out of itſelf into the main parts of your diſcourſe: but at leaſt you ſhould make it appear to be the ground-work of your diſcourſe, and not an after-thought.

Plan your method in the beginning of your compoſition: but change it afterwards, if you ſee cauſe. Never run the matter of one head into another, nor digreſs to any thing foreign; for every ſubject, well conſidered, will afford you enough. It is uſually beſt to propoſe your general heads together, before you proceed upon them ſeparately, and to give notice when you come to each. Subdiviſions alſo aſſiſt the memory of the hearer, if they are not too many; and paſſing from a former head to the next by an eaſy tranſition, is graceful. But a diſpoſition may be very orderly, without mentioning, in form, the ſeveral members of which it conſiſts; and ſometimes that formality prevents a diſcourſe from flowing with freedom and ſpirit. After the explanatory part, proofs from reaſon and ſcripture take the next place; then inferences, if any uſeful ones follow peculiarly from what hath preceded: and laſtly exhortations to ſuitable practice, which can hardly ever be omitted, and ought to be ſuch as may leave a durable impreſſion. The length of ſermons, though it ſhould always be moderate, may be very different at different times. Only give no room to think, that in a ſhort one you have ſaid but little; or in a long one have either ſaid any thing which was

not pertinent, or dwelt upon any thing beyond what was needful.

An indiſpenſible point throughout is to preſerve attention; for if that be not paid, all your labour is loſt. And perſons are ſingularly apt to be inattentive to preachers. Our ſubjects are, and ought to be, the moſt common and trite of any. And hence, unleſs we uſe a little honeſt art to prevent it, our people will think, will many of them find indeed, that they know beforehand moſt of what we ſhall deliver to them, and ſo will ſoon grow weary of minding us. Coming to church, the bulk of mankind, even ſtill, conſider as a duty; but hearing as they ought, they partly neglect, and partly experience to be difficult. Therefore we muſt not only admoniſh, but aſſiſt them. For this end we muſt ſhow them, from firſt to laſt, that we are not merely ſaying good things in their preſence, but directing what we ſay to them perſonally, as a matter which concerns them beyond expreſſion. More general diſcourſes they often want ſkill to take home to themſelves; and oftener yet inclination; ſo they ſit all the while ſtupidly regardleſs of what is delivered. Therefore we muſt intereſt them in it, by calling upon them to obſerve, by aſking them queſtions to anſwer ſilently in their own minds, by every prudent incitement to follow us cloſely. But then we muſt make them underſtand, that in preaching againſt ſin we never preach againſt ſuch or ſuch a ſinner; but mean to amend and improve all who want it; wiſhing every one to apply as much as poſſible of what he hears to his own benefit, but nothing to the reproach of his neighbour.

Still you will preſs them in vain to pay attention, unleſs you win them to it by what you have to ſay. And one principal contrivance for that purpoſe is to make your ſermons extremely clear. Terms and phraſes may be familiar to you, which are quite unintelligible to them; and I fear this happens much oftener than we ſuſpect. Therefore guard againſt it. Your expreſſions may be very common, without being low; yet employ the loweſt, provided they are not ridiculous, rather than not be underſtood. Let your ſentences, and the parts of them, be ſhort, where you can. And place your words ſo, eſpecially in the longer, that your meaning may be evident all the way. For if they take it not immediately, they have no time to conſider of it, as they might in reading a book;

a book; and if they are perplexed in the beginning of a period, they will never attempt going on with you to the end; but give up the whole, as out of their reach. Avoid ruſticity and groſsneſs in your ſtile; yet be not too fond of ſmooth and ſoft and flowing language; but ſtudy to be nervous and expreſſive; and bear the cenſure of being unpoliſhed, rather than uninfluencing. Never multiply arguments beyond neceſſity; for they will only tire: abſtain from weak ones; for they will diſcredit the ſtrong. Employ no arguments to prove things, which need not be proved: for you will only make them doubtful. Employ no long or ſubtle arguments to prove any thing: but reſt your aſſertions on the dictates of plain good ſenſe. Never expreſs yourſelves on any point, as *having dominion over the faith* * of your hearers; but lay before them the beſt evidence, of which they are capable. In matters too high for them, let them know, in a modeſt manner, that you ſpeak the ſentiments of the more learned, in which providence hath by their ſtation directed them to acquieſce: in others, reaſon more at large, in the ſpirit of St Paul, when he told the Corinthians, *I ſpeak as to wiſe men: judge ye what I ſay* †.

You might perhaps give more entertainment, and procure more applauſe, by diſregarding ſome of theſe directions. But your buſineſs is, not to pleaſe or be admired, but to do good: to make men think, not of your abilities, attainments, or eloquence, but of the ſtate of their own ſouls; and to fix them in the belief and practice of what will render them happy now and to eternity. For this purpoſe (obſerve further) it will by no means ſuffice to teach them outward regularity and decency; and let them fancy they have religion enough, when they come to church pretty conſtantly, and live as well as their neighbours: though, in ſome reſpects ill, and, ſcarce in any, well, from a principle of conſcience. Or be they from a ſenſe of duty ever ſo honeſt, and ſober, and chaſte, and beneficent; another indiſpenſable part of morals is the diſcipline of the inward man. And affectionate piety is full as neceſſary, as morals can be: and goſpel piety no leſs than natural.

* 2 Cor. i. 24. † 1 Cor. x. 15.

Here then lay your foundation: and ſet before your people the lamentable condition of fallen man, the numerous actual ſins, by which they have made it worſe, the redemption wrought out for them by Jeſus Chriſt, the nature and importance of true faith in him, their abſolute need of the grace of the Divine Spirit in order to obey his precepts. This will be addreſſing yourſelves to them as Chriſtian miniſters ought to Chriſtian hearers. The holy ſcriptures will furniſh you with matter for it abundantly. Short and plain reaſonings, founded on their authority, will dart conviction into every mind: whereas, if your doctrine and your ſpeech be not that of their bibles; if you contradict, or explain away, or paſs over in ſilence, any thing taught there, they who are beſt contented with you, will learn little from you; and others will be offended, and quit you when they can. We have in fact loſt many of our people to ſectaries by not preaching in a manner ſufficiently evangelical: and ſhall neither recover them from the extravancies, into which they have run, nor keep more from going over to them, but by returning to the right way: *declaring all the counſel of God* *; and that principally, *not in the words which man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth*†.

Yet the obſcurer of ſcriptural paſſages we ſhall do well to omit; or, if there be need, illuſtrate them, as far as we can, briefly; not to aim at minute explanations of myſteries; but urge the belief of them from deciſive paſſages of God's word, quoted according to its real import, and leave them as that hath left them. For by attempting to throw in more light, than our preſent ſtate admits, you will only dazzle and blind thoſe, who *ſee* before as *through a glaſs darkly*‡.

You are debtors indeed *both to the wiſe and to the unwiſe*‖. But remember, the ignorant are by far the greateſt number; and unneceſſary knowledge, if you could communicate it to them, is of ſmall uſe. But you will never be able to enlarge on abſtruſe and difficult points to the edification of the generality; whereas you may dwell on the plaineſt to the ſatisfaction and improvement of the moſt learned. It is true, declining to ſhow reading or acuteneſs may be to ſome a painful ſelf-denial; but able judges will eaſily perceive, both that you

* Acts xx. 27. † 1 Cor. ii. 13. ‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 12. ‖ Rom. i. 14.

you could ſhow them, and why you do not. Therefore enter but little, if at all, into matters about which your hearers are not likely to err, at leaſt dangerouſly. Yet ſuffer not either the evidence or the fundamentals of Chriſtianity, or the honour of the proteſtant religion, or of the eſtabliſhed church, to want a due ſupport, when you are any way called to the defence of them. At ſuch times, demonſtrate your zeal; but be ſure to do it with a Chriſtian temper; *in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves* *: at others, avoid a controverſial manner, and confine yourſelves to brief inſtructions on theſe heads.

It may poſſibly ſometimes be neceſſary in our ſermons to vindicate our rights, and *magnify our office* †. But this muſt be done very ſparingly and cautiouſly; ſo as to cut off all pretence, that we *take the overſight of God's flock*, either *for filthy lucre*, or from a deſire of *being lords over his heritage* ‡. We muſt never ſet up an undue, never a ſuſpicious claim; but confeſs, that the treaſure of the goſpel is committed to us entirely for the ſake of others, not our own; and that *we have it in earthen veſſels* §; are liable to continual imperfections and frailties. Such humility is no leſs our wiſdom, than our duty. For that clergyman will always acquire the greateſt reſpect, who ſhows the moſt care to deſerve it, and the leaſt eagerneſs to demand it.

Every part of your diſcourſes muſt preſerve the gravity and the earneſtneſs, which is inſeparable from ſubjects of a religious nature. If you can ſpeak of theſe lightly and negligently your auditors will ſuſpect you have little concern about them; they of courſe will have leſs in hearing you; their thoughts will wander to the ends of the earth, or their attention to every thing be buried in ſleep. But though languid in no part, you will however be comparatively cool in expoſitions of ſcripture, in doctrinal, in caſuiſtical points, reſerving your chief warmth for the great articles of Chriſtian practice. There your very utmoſt endeavours will be needful to produce in your people a due ſenſe of guilt and unworthineſs, fervent deſires of pardon, love to him who hath loved them, reſignation to God's pleaſure, firm purpoſes of obeying his laws; to caution them effectually againſt profaneneſs,

* 2 Tim. ii. 25. † Rom. xi. 13. ‡ 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. § 2 Cor. iv. 7.

neſs, lukewarmneſs, formality, reſentment, hard-heartedneſs, unjuſt love of gain, fondneſs of unlawful indulgences; to inſpire them with good-will towards all men, with proportionably, kind regards to thoſe who ſtand in nearer relations to them, diligence to be uſeful in their ſeveral ſtations, reaſonable indifference towards the things of this life, pious longings for a better. Their degree of knowledge, rank and circumſtances of life, their prevailing notions and cuſtoms, will afford you much further employment, to make your ſermons local, if I may ſo expreſs it; calculated to promote the virtues which they are chiefly called to exerciſe, and guard againſt the ſins, of which they are chiefly in danger. For what perfectly ſuits one congregation may be extremely foreign from the exigencies of another. And further ſtill, you muſt not only urge them to do their duty, but to uſe the means of doing it; which muſt be pointed out to them; avoiding temptations, keeping clear of bad company, contracting friendſhips with ſerious and prudent perſons, employing themſelves in proper buſineſs, reading good books, forming pious, yet prudent, reſolutions, and begging, in private prayer, *grace to help in time of need* *: not ſtrictly confining their devotions to any forms, though forms are very uſeful, but varying them according to their ſpiritual condition. Theſe are the things, on which you muſt inſiſt with your whole force; *not as pleaſing men, but God, which trieth our hearts* †.

Yet, while you take without reſerve all requiſite freedom, you muſt alſo take care not to provoke, inſtead of reforming them; but ſhow, that you ſincerely wiſh well to them; and think as well of them as you can; you muſt praiſe them when you have opportunity; give them cautions oftener than reproofs, and never reprove harſhly; but expreſs a fatherly concern, rather than anger, at their faults. Repreſent no fault as worſe than it is; and carry no injunction to an extravagant height. If you do, they will either think you unreaſonable, or themſelves incapable of becoming good; or will run into ſome abſurdity by attempting it. And for their encouragement, along with the duties, lay before them, in a ſtrong light, the comforts alſo, preſent and future, of religion.

It

* Heb. iv. 16. † 1 Theſſ. ii. 4.

It is but too poſſible, that ſometimes you muſt excite your people to virtues, in which you are, more or leſs, deficient yourſelves. For it would be heinous unfaithfulneſs to omit or explain away neceſſary precepts becauſe you are imperfect in the practice of them. And lamentable is our caſe, if there be any Chriſtian obligation, on which we dare not for ſhame ſpeak freely: yet ſtill worſe, if we harden our conſciences, till we venture boldly to enjoin what we habitually tranſgreſs. For in that caſe, not only our credit will be utterly loſt, but our amendment almoſt abſolutely hopeleſs. Therefore correct your own hearts and lives in the firſt place by the diſcourſes which you compoſe: become in all points good men; and then you may fearleſsly ſpeak on all points like ſuch.

Yet even good men muſt obſerve a difference. Thoſe of leſs knowledge muſt expreſs themſelves with leſs poſitiveneſs, thoſe of leſs gravity and diſcretion with leſs authority and ſtrictneſs, than their betters. And every one ſhould conſider, what his age and ſtanding, reputation for learning, prudence and piety, will ſupport him in ſaying; that he may not take more upon him, than will be allowed him. Yet all muſt aſſiduouſly take pains to acquire, and preſerve, ſuch eſteem, that they may ſay with propriety whatever their function requires. For how unhappy would it be to diſqualify yourſelves from uſefulneſs by levity or indiſcretion!

But even the beſt qualified to exhort muſt keep within due bounds; convince the judgment before they attempt to warm the paſſions; riſe gradually into what deſerves the name of vehemence; and be ſure neither to riſe any higher, nor continue in that ſtrain any longer, than they are likely to carry their auditors along with them. For if they are cold, while the preacher is pathetic, the impreſſion made upon them will be very different from what he wiſhes. And our nation is more diſpoſed, than moſt others, to approve a temperate manner of ſpeaking. Every thing, which can be called oratory, is apt to be deemed affectation: and if it goes a great length, raiſes contempt and ridicule. But were the moſt ſerious emotions to be raiſed by mere mechanical vehemence, they would be unfairly raiſed: and what is beyond nature will uſually ſoon ſubſide; perhaps with ſcorn, upon reflection, of what was admired when heard. Or ſuppoſing ſuch admiration

tion to continue, bad effects may as poſſibly follow as good: whereas warmth of affection, excited to a proper degree by the rational enforcement of ſolid arguments, promiſes to be durable, and will never do harm. The faculty of moving hearers thus, is a moſt valuable bleſſing. And ſuch as have but little of it, may conſiderably improve it, by labouring to affect themſelves deeply with what they would ſay; and thinking, what methods of ſaying it will be moſt perſuaſive. But they muſt not attempt to force an unwilling genius too far. If they do, what it produces will be ſo ungraceful and unſucceſsful, that they had much better content themſelves to do as well as they can in their own way.

Your delivery muſt in the firſt place be ſuch, that you can be heard; elſe you preach in vain: beſides that ſpeaking too low argues indolence and indifference; whereas an audible exertion is a mark of earneſtneſs: and the common people are peculiarly pleaſed, when their miniſter appears to take pains about them. But then you muſt neither be precipitately quick, (for if your words be underſtood, your meaning will not) nor tediouſly ſlow; nor ſink any one part of your ſentence under its proper level, eſpecially the concluding part. Diſtinctneſs will do much to ſupply want of ſtrength in ſpeaking; which however it is very material that you ſhould try to remedy gradually, as many have done, by a prudent exerciſe of your voice. Yet ſtraining beyond your due pitch will give your hearers pain, make you in ſome degree inarticulate, and produce a ſinging ſort of cadence and tone. This laſt indeed hath been ſometimes known to pleaſe weak perſons: but it cannot poſſibly make them either wiſer or better: and it offends the judicious extremely. Many learn in their childhood a provincial dialect; which they cannot lay aſide eaſily; and yet ſhould endeavour it, eſpecially if they ſettle in a different part of the nation. Some acquire uncouth accents one knows not how; ſome bring them from the ſchool or the college: and now and then one ſeems to hear a theatrical pronunciation; which hath been condemned even by Heathen writers upon oratory; and is the very worſt, that a Chriſtian orator can adopt. It reminds his hearers, greatly to his diſcredit, where he muſt probably have learnt it; he will alſo appear by means of it to be only acting a part, and be regarded accordingly. Indeed all remarkable imitation,

tion, in delivery as well as compoſition, though of a perſon in your own profeſſion, and one juſtly admired, will be diſliked. You will never attain to an advantageous reſemblance of his manner; but, by a miſtaken or overdone mimicry, turn what perhaps may be graceful in the original, into oddneſs. Or, could you avoid that, you would leſſen your weight and influence; which muſt ariſe from ſpeaking in your own character, not perſonating another. Every man's voice and utterance, as well as his face, belongs to himſelf alone; and it is vain to think either of looking or talking like ſuch or ſuch a one. Therefore preſerve what is native to you: free it from adventitious faults; improve it, if you can; but remember, that you may deprave it by the endeavour; and certainly will, if you change it eſſentially. Speak to your people as you would in converſation, when you undertake to inform or perſuade a friend, in a concern of great moment; only with more deliberateneſs, more ſtrength and energy, in proportion to the numbers; and vary both your ſtile and your elocution, as in converſation you always do, ſuitably to your matter. For monotony both abſolutely prevents emotion, and ſoon deadens attention. It is worſt indeed, when uniformly unnatural, by degenerating into a kind of chant. But merely to be uniformly inexpreſſive, be it through heavineſs, or effeminacy, or inſignificant lightneſs, is either very blameable, or, if it cannot be helped, very unhappy. And perhaps a little even of injudicious variety is better than a wearisome ſameneſs.

In public ſpeaking, perſons commonly fall into errors, and ſometimes great ones, without perceiving it, though they can obſerve ſmall ones in others. Therefore you will act prudently in deſiring ſome well-wiſher, on whoſe judgement and frankneſs you can depend, to advertiſe you of any thing wrong in the conduct of your voice, or in your action; and you will ſhow your gratitude and good ſenſe by ſtudying to amend it.

We of this nation are not given to uſe or admire much action, either in ordinary diſcourſe, or even in popular harangues. And, were it for this reaſon only, a preacher ſhould be moderate in it. But beſides, in the nature of the thing, you had far better have none, than what is unbecoming, or unmeanning, or unſuitable to what you are ſaying, or repeat-

ed at certain diſtances, whatever you are ſaying. Yet ſomewhat of geſture, appearing to be artleſs, and regulated by propriety, may be very uſeful, eſpecially in the warmer parts of exhortation, reproof, or even argument. For to be altogether motionleſs, when the ſubject is animating, and our language perhaps vehement, ſeems an inconſiſtency; and may raiſe a doubt, whether we are in earneſt. But ſtill defect in action is better than exceſs. And a great deal cannot well be uſed by thoſe who read their ſermons.

This is one objection againſt reading them: and there are ſeveral beſides. Perſons who are ſhort-ſighted, have peculiar reaſons to avoid it. Indeed almoſt all perſons are accuſtomed, from their early years, to read in a different tone from that in which they ſpeak at other times: and we ſeldom correct it thoroughly. Or if we did, what we ſay in ſuch manner as to make it ſeem the preſent dictate of our own hearts, will much better make its way into the hearts of others, than if our eyes are fixed all the while on a paper, from which we viſibly recite the whole. It will ordinarily be uttered too with more diſengaged freedom and livelier ſpirit. The preacher alſo will be abler to enforce his words by ſignificant looks: to perceive from the countenances of his hearers, what they comprehend, and by what they are moved; and may accordingly enlarge on that head, or proceed to another, as he finds cauſe. He may likewiſe oppoſe with ſucceſs irregular itinerant declaimers, who affect and gain popularity by this method: and as their credulous followers are apt to think it a ſupernatural gift, he may undeceive them by imitating in this caſe the practice of St Paul in another, which he deſcribes thus: *what I do, I will do, that wherein they glory they may be found even as we* *. But then there muſt be a long and diligent preparation to do this well: ſome will ſcarce ever attain ſufficient preſence of mind, and readineſs of expreſſion: others will acquit themſelves handſomely in a good flow of ſpirits, but meanly when theſe fail them: and though little inaccuracies will be obſerved by few, yet heſitations will by all, and every other conſiderable fault by ſenſible hearers, to the preacher's great diſgrace. Or if ſuch do get the faculty of being always able to ſay ſomething plauſible, it will tempt them

* 2 Cor. xi. 12.

them to neglect the improvement of their understandings and their discourses; and to be content with digressing, whenever they are at a loss, from their text and their subject, to any point, on which they can be copious: to utter off hand such crudities, as they could not bear to write down; and think the meanest of extempore effusions good enough for the populace. Now, on the contrary, previously studying and writing sermons tends to fill them with well digested and well adapted matter, disposed in right order: especially, if you will carefully revise them every time you preach them; supply deficiencies, blot out repetitions, correct improprieties, guard against misapprehensions, enlighten what is obscure, familiarize what is too high, transpose what is wrongly placed, strengthen the weak parts, animate the languid ones. Your composition needs not be at all the stiffer, but may be the freer, for the pains thus employed upon it. You may frame it purposely to be spoken as if you were not reading it: and by looking it over a few times when you are about to use it, you may deliver it almost without being observed to read it. The more you acquire of this art, the more you will be liked, and the stronger impression you will make. But after all, *every man*, as the apostle saith on a different occasion, *hath his proper gift of God; one after this manner, another after that* *: let each cultivate his own; and no one censure or despise his brother. There is a middle way, used by our predecessors, of setting down, in short notes, the method and principal heads, and enlarging on them in such words as present themselves at the time. Perhaps, duly managed, this would be the best. That which is, or lately was, common amongst foreign divines, of writing sermons first, then getting and repeating them by heart, not only is unreasonably laborious, but subjects persons to the hazard of stopping disagreeably, and even breaking off abruptly, for want of memory. Or if they escape that danger, there still remains another, of saying their lesson with ungraceful marks of fear and caution.

Instead of taking a text, which comprehends within itself the whole subject, of which you would treat, it may often be useful to chuse one, which hath a reference to things preceding and following it, and to expound all the context. This

* 1 Cor. vii. 7.

will afford you a variety of matter, and give you opportunities for ſhort unexpected remarks; with which perſons are frequently more ſtruck, than with an entire diſcourſe; for of the latter they foreſee the drift all the way, and therefore ſet themſelves to fence againſt it. Thus alſo you may illuſtrate the beauties, at the ſame time that you ſhow the practical uſes, of large portions of ſcripture at once: for inſtance, of a parable, a converſation, a miracle, of our bleſſed Lord; or a narration concerning this or that other memorable perſon, whether deſerving of praiſe or blame. For ſcripture hiſtories and examples are eaſily remembered, and have great weight. In proportion as we overlook them, we ſhall appear leſs to be miniſters of God's word: and our people will have leſs veneration for us, or for it, or for both. You may alſo in this method, as you go along, obviate objections to paſſages of God's word without ſtating them in form, at which otherwiſe many may ſtumble, if they read with attention: and if they do not attend, they will read with no profit. Several things in holy writ ſeem to be ſtrange; hardly conſiſtent one with another, or with our natural notions. Of theſe difficulties, which muſt always perplex perſons, and may often deliver them over a prey to infidels, you may occaſionally remove one and another; meddling with none, but ſuch as you can overcome: and from your ſucceſs in theſe, you may obſerve to your auditors the probability, that others are capable of ſolutions alſo. Perhaps they will forget your ſolution; but they will remember that they heard one, and may have it repeated to them, if they pleaſe. By theſe means you will teach your people, what is grievouſly wanting in the preſent age, to value their bibles more, and underſtand them better; and to read them both with pleaſure and profit, drawing from them uſeful inferences and obſervations, as they have heard you do. Formerly courſes of lectures on whole books of ſcripture were cuſtomary in churches; and they were doubtleſs extremely beneficial. It would not be eaſy, if poſſible, to revive theſe now; but the practice which I have been propoſing to you, is ſome approach towards them.

I would alſo adviſe you to inſtruct your pariſhioners, amongſt other things, from ſome proper text or texts, in the daily and occaſional ſervices of the church; not with a view to extol either immoderately, much leſs to provoke wrath againſt

gainſt thoſe who diſſent from us; but mildly to anſwer unjuſt imputations upon our liturgy, and chiefly to ſhow the meaning, the reaſons, the uſes of each part; that your congregations may, as the apoſtle expreſſes it, *pray with the underſtanding* *. In all compoſitions, there will be ſome things, which to ſome perſons want explaining; and, were the whole ever ſo clear, men are ſtrangely apt both to hear and to ſpeak words, that are become familiar to them, with ſcarce any attention to their ſenſe. And ſo by degrees a bodily attendance and worſhip become all that they pay; and they return home almoſt as little edified, as they would by devotions in a tongue unknown. Convincing them of this fault, and aſſiſting them to mend it, muſt greatly contribute to the promotion of true piety amongſt them. Nor will it be a ſmall benefit, if, in the courſe of your liturgical inſtructions, you can perſuade the bulk of your congregations to join in the decent uſe of pſalmody, as their forefathers did; inſtead of the preſent ſhameful neglect of it, by almoſt all, and the conceited abuſe of it by a few.

But a fervent deſire of being uſeful will teach you more than any particular directions can, upon every head. Without this deſire, you will either be negligent; or if you would ſeem zealous, you will be detected for want of uniformity and perſeverance. Therefore make ſure firſt that all be right within, and *out of the good treaſure of the heart you will bring forth good things* †, naturally and prudently, and, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, effectually. It is not eaſy indeed even to inſtruct the willing; much leſs to convince the unwilling, and reform the wicked. But ſtill theſe are the purpoſes, for which we are God's Embaſſadors; and we muſt try with indefatigable perſeverance every way to execute our commiſſion. We muſt ſtudy human nature in our own breaſts, and thoſe of others: we muſt acquaint ourſelves, by all innocent means, with the opinions and practices of the world, eſpecially of our hearers, that we may lay their hearts and lives open to their view, and make them feel what we ſay. We muſt conſider all the while we compoſe, and reconſider as we preach, and afterwards: "Is this adapted ſufficiently to "the capacities, the ſtate of mind, the circumſtances of the "poor

* 1 Cor. xiv. 15. † Mat. xii. 35.

"poor people who are to hear it: will this part be clear, that "home enough, a third well guarded againſt miſtakes: will "they go back as much better diſpoſed than they came, as it "is in our power to make them?" Perhaps one or more ways of repreſenting a neceſſary doctrine or duty have failed. We muſt think, whether a more likely may not be found, or a leſs likely in appearance prove more ſucceſsful.

If you have preached a conſiderable time in a place, and done little or no good; there muſt, in all probability, be ſome fault, not only in your hearers, but in you or your ſermons. *For the word of God*, when duly diſpenſed, is to this day, as it was originally, *powerful, and ſharper than a two-edged ſword**. Inquire then, where the fault may be. Never deſpair, nor be immoderately grieved, if your ſucceſs be ſmall: but be not indifferent about it: do not content yourſelves with the indolent plea, that you have done your duty, and are not anſwerable for the event. You may have done it as far as the law requires: yet by no means have diſcharged your conſciences. You may have done it conſcientiouſly, yet not with the diligence or the addreſs that you ought. And as we are ſeldom eaſy in other caſes, when we fail of our end; if we are ſo in this, it doth not look well. At leaſt conſult your hearts upon the point. And if you have been deficient, beg of God pardon, grace and direction: endeavour to do more for your people: conſult your brethren about the means. Converſation of this nature will much better become clergymen when they meet, than any which is not relative to their profeſſion, or only relative to the profits of it. But eſpecially aſk the advice of the moſt able and ſerious.

I am very ſenſible, that in all the particulars before mentioned I have been far from obſerving ſufficiently myſelf the rules which I have now recommended to you: but hope I ſhall make ſome amends, though late, to the church of Chriſt, by exhorting and directing others. It was my purpoſe, after ſpeaking of ſtated inſtructions, to have proceeded to occaſional ones: a very important and ſadly neglected part of the paſtoral care. But my ſtrength will not ſuffice; and I have detained you already too long. If God ſpare me to another like occaſion, that ſhall be my ſubject. If not, as is moſt probable,

I ſhall

* Heb. iv. 12.

I ſhall endeavour to leave behind me ſome admonitions to you concerning it*. At preſent I can only intreat you to conſider very ſeriouſly, what numbers there are in moſt pariſhes, and therefore perhaps in yours, whom you cannot think to be in a ſtate of ſalvation; and how greatly it imports you to uſe with them, as you ſolemnly promiſed at your ordination, not only *public* but *private monitions, as need ſhall require, and occaſion ſhall be given.* The eternal welfare of many poor creatures may depend on this; and your own is deeply concerned in it, as God himſelf hath declared: who will certainly expect that what he requires you to do, be done to the very utmoſt of your ability. *Son of Man, I have made thee a watchman unto the houſe of Iſrael: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. If thou doſt not ſpeak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, he ſhall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. But if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedneſs, he ſhall die in his iniquity, but thou haſt delivered thy ſoul*†.

* Nothing of this kind has been found among his Grace's papers.

† Ezek. iii. 17, 18, 19. xxxiii. 7, 8, 9.

INSTRUC-

INSTRUCTIONS

GIVEN TO

CANDIDATES

FOR

ORDERS,

AFTER THEIR SUBSCRIBING THE ARTICLES.

GENTLEMEN,

YOU have now made the ſubſcription, by law required. And as, in ſo doing, you have acknowledged the Liturgy and Articles of the Church of England to be agreeable to the word of God; I hope you will think yourſelves bound, as you are, to be careful, that the inſtructions which you give, and the doctrines which you maintain, in public and in private, be agreeable to that Liturgy and thoſe Articles: that you neither contradict, nor omit to inculcate and defend, on proper occaſions, the truths, which they contain.

In the next place, I exhort you to ſpend a due ſhare of the remainder of this day, in what, I truſt, hath employed not a little of your time already; weighing diligently the nature and importance of the undertaking, in which you are about to engage; forming ſuitable reſolutions; and earneſtly begging that grace of God, which alone can *make you able miniſters of the New Teſtament* *.

Nothing

* 2 Cor. iii. 6.

Nothing is better fitted to aſſiſt you in this good work, than the office of ordination, of Deacons or Prieſts, as you are reſpectively concerned. You muſt certainly have read it over, before you offered yourſelves. Since that, you have been directed to read it again. But I deſire you to peruſe it once more this afternoon with your beſt attention, that you may join in it to-morrow with a greater degree of rational ſeriouſneſs; and particularly, that you may anſwer, on more deliberate conſideration, the queſtions, which will then be put to you. For there can hardly be a caſe, in which either inſincerity, or even thoughtleſſneſs, would carry in it heavier guilt.

And that you may be in no perplexity concerning the meaning or fitneſs of any part of the office, it may be uſeful to go through ſome parts of it along with you beforehand, proceeding as they lie in the book.

The firſt thing, which Candidates, both for Deacons and Prieſts orders, after they are preſented, are required to do, as diſtinct from the reſt of the congregation, is to take the oaths of allegiance and ſupremacy. For, as you are to be miniſters of the church eſtabliſhed by law in this nation, it is evidently reaſonable, that the civil government, eſtabliſhed by law, ſhould be aſſured of the fidelity and affection of perſons to whom it gives and ſecures privileges and profits; and who are intruſted with the care, amongſt other matters, of making men good ſubjects. Now, theſe oaths bind every perſon, who takes them, to *honour the king* *; and, by conſequence, all that are put in authority under him, both in word and deed; and to *lead*, in ſubjection to them, *quiet and peaceable lives* †. That theſe things may, with a good conſcience, be promiſed and performed, there is no juſt cauſe of doubt. But if any one thinks there is, he ought to apply for ſatisfaction; and till he receives it, he ought to abſtain from taking the oaths. *For whatever is not of faith is ſin* ‡: and in this caſe it would be no leſs than perjury. Nothing is a plea ſufficient for committing any ſin, much leſs one ſo heinous: not even all the force that can be uſed. But here is no ſhadow of force. You are come voluntarily to offer yourſelves, well knowing

* 1 Pet. ii. 17. † 1 Tim. ii. 2. ‡ Rom. xiv. 23.

that the oaths muſt be tendered to you; that is, you have made it your choice to take them.

But by your ſubſcription you have entered into a further obligation; to uſe the liturgy in all your public miniſtrations *: and therefore, to pray for the king by name, for his long life and proſperity, for his obtaining victory over all his enemies. God forbid, that any one who doth this, ſhould be diſaffected to the government, under whichwe live. And if we are friends, it is both our duty and our wiſdom to ſhow that we are. For thus we ſhall ſtrengthen an eſtabliſhment, on which, under God, the ſafe enjoyment of our religion intirely depends; we ſhall procure the ſupport, which we cannot but be ſenſible, that we want; and we ſhall ſilence, or at leaſt confute thoſe, who love to ſpeak deſpitefully againſt us on this head.

After the oaths, Candidates for Deacons orders are aſked: *Do you truſt that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghoſt to take upon you this office and miniſtration?* A ſolemn queſtion; and which ought to be well conſidered, before it is anſwered. Obſerve then, it is not ſaid, *Do you feel*; have you an immediate perception of ſuch an impulſe from the Holy Ghoſt, as you can diſtinguiſh from all other inward movements by its manner of impreſſing you: but, *Do you truſt*; are you on good grounds perſuaded? What then are the proper grounds of ſuch perſuaſion?

In the firſt place, If he hath not moved you effectually to live *ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly*†, you may be ſure he hath not moved you to aſſume the office of a miniſter in God's church. Examine yourſelves therefore ſtrictly on this point: a moſt important one to all men; but to you, if poſſible, above all; and before you preſume to officiate in his houſe, aſk your hearts, Do you tranſgreſs, do you omit, no duty, wilfully or knowingly? Have you a genuine practical faith in Chriſt? Are you, on the terms of the goſpel covenant, intitled to everlaſting life? But ſuppoſing that you are, more is requiſite in the preſent caſe: and what more, the latter part of the queſtion points out. *To ſerve God, for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his church.* This then being the deſign,

* Can. 36. † Tit. ii. 12.

ſign of the office; if, ſo far as you know your own hearts, this is your motive to deſire it; and if, ſo far as you can judge of your own abilities, and attainments, they are equal to it in ſome competent degree: then you may ſafely anſwer, that *you truſt you are moved by the Holy Ghoſt to take it upon you.* For *we* can *have ſuch truſt to Godward* only *through Chriſt*, who hath ſent us the Spirit: *we are not ſufficient to* do or *think any thing as of ourſelves: but our ſufficiency is of God* *. Together with this principal motive, of *ſerving God* by *edifying his people*, you may allowably have the ſubordinate one, of providing a decent maintenance for your own ſupport, and for thoſe who may belong to you: but if you are indifferent or cool about the former, and attentive only or chiefly to the latter: ſince you cannot think that ſuch diſpoſitions are approved by the Holy Spirit, as proper for the miniſtry, you will be guilty of *lying to him* †, if you affirm, that he hath moved you to enter on it with them. Therefore inſpect your ſouls thoroughly; and form them, by the help of Divine grace, to be duly influenced by the right principle, before you venture to anſwer this queſtion: which is very wiſely made the leading one; becauſe your inducement will be the rule of your behaviour, and probably alſo the meaſure of your ſucceſs.

The next queſtion, put to thoſe who apply for Deacons orders, and the firſt to ſuch as have received them, and deſire to be admitted prieſts, is, *Do you think, that you are truly called, according to the will of Chriſt, and the due order of this realm, to the miniſtry of the church?* That is, are you conſcious neither of any defect in body or mind, nor of any other impediment, which may, for the preſent, if not for ever, be, according to the laws of God or man, a juſt obſtacle in your way? Such things may eſcape our knowledge or memory. Therefore we call upon you to inform us. And you are bound to anſwer with ſincerity.

It is not requiſite, that I ſhould enlarge on every queſtion; though it is, that you ſhould weigh every one ſeriouſly. That, which recites the duties of Deacons, may ſeem to have ſome difficulty in it; as it aſſigns to them occupations, which the acts of the apoſtles do not, in the hiſtory of their appointment ‡; and as they are but little employed now in the ſingle buſineſs,

* 2 Cor. iii. 4, 5. † Acts v. 3. ‡ Acts vi.

there allotted to them. But that paſſage of ſcripture plainly was intended to ſet forth, only the immediate and urgent reaſon of ordaining them, not the whole of what was, then or ſoon after, given them in charge. For we find in the ſame book, that Philip the Deacon both preached and baptized *. And the qualifications, required in Deacons by St Paul †, intimate very clearly, that more things muſt, even then, have been incumbent upon them, than adminiſtering to the relief of the poor. Accordingly, from the primitive ages downwards, they are deſcribed as performing occaſionally moſt of the ſame offices, which they do now; and being, what their name denotes, aſſiſtant and ſubſervient to prieſts in all proper employments ‡. And the leſs they are engaged in their chief original one, the more opportunity and the more need they have, to ſhow diligence in the other good works, belonging or ſuited peculiarly to their ſtation.

The next queſtion is common to candidates for each order: *Will you faſhion your own lives, and thoſe of your families, ſo far as in you lieth, to be wholeſome examples to the flock of Chriſt?* This extends to avoiding in your own behaviour, and reſtraining in theirs, follies, levities, mean and diſreputable actions, as well as crimes and vices. The apoſtle enjoins *deacons and their wives to be grave* §: much more then ought prieſts. He enjoins every Chriſtian to *abſtain from all appearance of evil* ‖. And our bleſſed Lord enjoius all his diſciples to *be wiſe*, as well as *harmleſs* ¶. Therefore govern yourſelves and yours by theſe rules: and conſider frequently, whether you obſerve them well. For without it you will neither gain eſteem, nor do good.

The laſt queſtion, put alike to the whole number of candidates, is, *Will you reverently obey your ordinary, and them to whom the government over you is committed?* You would be bound to this, though you were not to promiſe it; for both reaſon and ſcripture demand it. Still more firmly you will be bound, when you have promiſed it, though it were of ſmall importance. But it is of very great, not only to the dignity and eaſe of your ſuperiors, but to your own intereſt, and the benefit

* Acts viii. 5,—13. 26,—40. † 1 Tim. iii. 8,—13.

‡ See Bingham's orig. eccl. l. 2. c. 20. § 1 Tim. iii. 8, 11.

‖ 1 Theſſ. v. 22. ¶ Mat. x. 16.

nefit of the whole church. Our Saviour both commands, and prayed for unity amongſt his followers in the moſt expreſſive terms *. Without union there cannot be a ſufficient degree either of ſtrength or beauty: and without ſubordination there cannot long be union. Therefore *obey*, as the apoſtle directs, *them that have the rule over you* †; and promote their honour, their credit, their influence. This will make us abler to ſerve the cauſe of religion, and protect you. And God forbid that, ſo far as we are able, we ſhould ever fail to be willing and zealous.

In the office for the ordination of prieſts, after a pious and awful charge, which I recommend to your moſt ſerious attention, follow ſeveral queſtions of the greateſt moment, your anſwers to which, I hope, you will remember to the laſt day of your lives. In theſe anſwers, beſides what hath been already mentioned, you promiſe, that *the doctrine and diſcipline of Chriſt, as contained in ſcripture, and received in this church and realm*, ſhall be the ſtandard of your teaching and acting; and every thing contrary to them be faithfully oppoſed by you: that you will *uſe both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the ſick as to the whole, within your cures*; and that, as frequently and fully *as need ſhall require, and occaſion be given*. You promiſe alſo, that *you will be diligent in prayers and reading the holy ſcriptures*; which by the preceding exhortation evidently appears to mean, private prayer and reading; *and in ſuch ſtudies, as help to the knowledge of ſcripture; laying aſide the ſtudy of the world and the fleſh*: that is, not making, either groſs pleaſures, or more refined amuſements, even literary ones unconnected with your profeſſion, or power, or profit, or advancement, or applauſe, your great aim in life; but labouring chiefly to qualify yourſelves for doing good to the ſouls of men, and applying carefully to that purpoſe whatever qualifications you attain. Further yet, you promiſe, that *you will maintain and ſet forwards, as much as lieth in you, quietneſs, peace and love among all Chriſtian people; and eſpecially among them that are or ſhall be committed to your charge*. By this you oblige yourſelves, never to raiſe or promote perſonal, family, parochial, eccleſiaſtical, political, or any other, animoſities; but to diſcourage, and, if poſſible, compoſe and extinguiſh them; than which

* John xiii. 34, 35. xvii. 11, 12, 21, 22. 23. † Heb. xiii. 17.

which you cannot perform a more Chriſtian part, or one more conducive to your honour and your uſefulneſs.

But, beſides pondering well beforehand theſe anſwers, which you are to make, I earneſtly beg you, to read and think them over often afterwards; and particularly, at each return of the ember weeks to examine yourſelves, as in the preſence of God, whether you have made good the engagement, into which you entered at your ordination. So far as you have, this practice will afford you the greateſt poſſible comfort; ſo far as you may have failed, it will ſuggeſt to you the moſt uſeful admonition.

After theſe queſtions, a ſhort ſilence is appointed to be kept for the ſecret prayers of the congregation, that God would enable and incline you to do what you have undertaken: which bleſſing, I hope, you will aſk at the ſame time for yourſelves very earneſtly. Then follows a hymn of conſiderable antiquity; and to be repeated with much reverence, on account of the important petitions and doctrines comprized in it, tho' it be altogether void of ornament in that old tranſlation, which we ſtill retain. Next to this, follows a very proper addreſs to the throne of grace, pronounced by the Biſhop alone, in the name of the whole aſſembly; which is inſtantly ſucceeded by the act of ordination.

The firſt words of that, *receive the Holy Ghoſt*, were uſed by our Saviour to his apoſtles, immediately after he had ſaid, *as my Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you**. *God gave not the Spirit by meaſure unto him*†: and he was able to beſtow what meaſure he pleaſed, both of ſpiritual gifts and graces upon others. He meant however by this benediction to confer only the ordinary ones: for the extraordinary, you know, were reſerved till after his aſcenſion. Far be it from the Biſhops of his Church to claim, even in reſpect of the former, the powers which he had. But ſtill theſe words in our mouths, when ſpoken over you, properly expreſs, in the firſt place, the communication of that authority, which proceeds from the Holy Ghoſt. For we read, that the Holy Ghoſt ſaid, *Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work, whereunto I have called them*‡: and that the latter of theſe exhorted the elders of the church of Epheſus, *Take heed to the flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made*

* John xx. 21, 22. † John iii. 34. ‡ Acts xiii. 2.

made you overſeers *. They alſo expreſs, in the ſecond place, our earneſt requeſt to the Father of mercies, that you may at all times enjoy ſuch proportions, both of the graces and gifts of the Spirit, as will be needful for you; which requeſt, if it be not your own fault, will prove effectual; becauſe having, in the common courſe of his providence, appointed us, tho' unworthy, to act in this behalf, he will aſſuredly be ready to own and bleſs our miniſtrations.

It follows very ſoon: *whoſe ſins thou doſt forgive, they are forgiven; and whoſe ſins thou doſt retain, they are retained.* Theſe again are the words of Chriſt to his apoſtles, immediately after the former. But he did not grant to them the power, either of retaining the ſins of penitent perſons, or of forgiving the impenitent. Nor do we pretend to grant, by uttering them, all the powers which the apoſtles had in this reſpect. They had *the diſcernment of ſpirits*†: and could ſay with certainty, when perſons were penitent, and conſequently forgiven, and when not ‡. They were able alſo to inflict miraculous puniſhments on offenders; and to remove, on their repentance, the puniſhments which had been inflicted. Theſe words will convey nothing of all this to you. But ſtill, when we uſe them, they give you, firſt, an aſſurance, that according to the terms of that goſpel, which you are to preach, men ſhall be pardoned or condemned: ſecondly, a right of inflicting eccleſiaſtical cenſures for a ſhorter or longer time, and of taking them off; which, in regard to external communion, is retaining or forgiving offences. This power, being beſtowed for the edification of the church, muſt be reſtrained, not only by general rules of order, but according to the particular exigencies of circumſtances. And our church wiſhes, with much reaſon, or circumſtances more favourable to the exertion of it §. But how little ſoever exerted, the power is inherent in the office of prieſthood. And though we are no more infallible in our proceedings and ſentences, than temporal judges are in theirs; yet our acts, as well as theirs, are to be reſpected, as done by competent authority. And if they are done on good grounds alſo, *whatever we ſhall bind or looſe on earth, will be bound or looſed in heaven.*

* Acts xx. 28. † 1 Cor. xii. 10. ‡ Acts viii. 21, 23.
§ Office of Commination.

ven *. Nor will other proofs of repentance be ſufficient in the ſight of God, if ſubmiſſion to the diſcipline of the church of Chriſt, when it hath been offended, and requires due ſatisfaction, be obſtinately refuſed, either from haughtineſs or negligence.

To theſe words is ſubjoined the concluding charge: *and be thou a faithful diſpenſer of the word of God, and of his holy ſacraments.* This then is the ſtewardſhip committed to you. And you cannot but ſee, in what a profane and corrupt age it is committed to you: how grievouſly religion, and its miniſters, are hated or deſpiſed; how lamentably both they, and its other profeſſors, are degenerated and divided. Your buſineſs will be, each within the ſphere of his influence, to prevent theſe things from growing worſe; which, bad as they are, they ſtill may; and, if poſſible, to make them better; or at leaſt, to recover or preſerve ſuch, as you can, from the general depravity. But you will never ſucceed in your attempts for this purpoſe, either by bitterneſs againſt infidels, heretics, and ſectaries, or by contempt and ridicule of enthuſiaſtic or ſuperſtitious perſons. The only right method is a very different one: diligent ſtudy, to fit yourſelves more completely for teaching and vindicating the truths of Chriſtianity: ſcriptural and rational inſtruction, aſſiduouſly given, with zeal and mildneſs duly tempered, and ſuited to the capacities and condition of your hearers: a willing and devout and affecting performance of all ſacred rites, whether in the church or elſewhere; but above all, a behaviour, innocent, humble, peaceable, diſintereſted, beneficent, abſtemious, diſcreet, religious.

Take heed therefore to your ſteps; and walk in the preſent evil days with ſuch piety and caution, that, as the office exhorts, *you may neither offend, nor be occaſion that others offend*; but may *cut off occaſion from them which deſire occaſion* † againſt you; that *they who are of the contrary part, and falſely accuſe your good converſation in Chriſt, may be aſhamed* ‡ of themſelves; or however, that your maſter and judge may not *be aſhamed of you* ‖ at the great day, but pronounce over each of you, *well done, good and faithful ſervant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord* §.

* Mat. xviii. 18. † 2 Cor. xi. 12. ‡ Tit. ii. 8. 1 Pet. iii. 16.
‖ Mark viii. 38. Luke ix. 26. § Mat. xxv. 21.

ORATIO

quam coram

SYNODO

PROVINCIÆ CANTUARIENSIS

Anno 1761 convocatâ

habendam ſcripſerat

ſed morbo præpeditus non habuit,

ARCHIEPISCOPUS.

SATISFECISTIS egregie, Fratres, noſtræ omnium expectationi, Prolocutore electo, quem naturæ dotibus cumulatum, fide Chriſtiana penitus imbutum, humanitate politum, eruditione excultum, auctoritate gravem novimus: atque adeo digniſſimum, qui a viro laudato iis ornaretur præconiis, quæ in utrumque conveniunt. Conceſſo igitur vobis libenter, quem petitis, Referendario, intendamus jam communiter animos in ea, quæ hodiernæ celebritatis ratio poſtulat. Et hæc quidem, licet minime idoneus, tamen cum id ſit officii mei, conabor exponere; oratione uſus Latinâ, (ſic enim eſt in more poſitum, nequid, puto, intelligant inepti auditores) nullâ autem adhibita dicendi elegantia; quam ſi ſectarer tandem poſt quadraginta ferme annorum deſuetudinem, omnino non aſſequerer; ſed familiari admodum ac tenui ſermone: Deum orans ut quod e pectore meo proveniet in veſtra deſcendat, et fructum ferat. Neque enim plauſum, ne veſtrum quidem, capto; de

hoc unice ſollicitus, ut alliquid, ſi poſſum, proferam, quo ſapientiores et meliores utrinque evadamus, et ſervi fideles utileſque domini noſtri Jeſu Chriſti inveniamur in ſupremo illo die.

Convenimus, Patres Fratreſque, in id parati, ut opem feramus veræ religioni, boniſque moribus, modo quidpiam ejuſmodi nobis demandetur. Quod cum jam diu non ſit factum, rogitant homines procacioris ingenii, quorſum huc ridenda ſolennitate, ſic enim interpretantur, congregamur, quibus nihil negotii datum eſt, nec etiam dabitur. Sinite quæſo, ut huic petulantiæ, nimium graſſanti, pauca prius reponam, quam ad alia progrediar.

Illudne ergo ſpernendum exiſtimant, quod hæc ſacra Synodus eodem antiquiſſimo jure conſtituta eſt, quo comitia procerum & eorum qui plebis vicem gerunt; quodque optimi principis juſſu acciti comparemus? Reverebuntur, qui recta ſapiunt, utramque partem, tam eccleſiaſticam quam civilem, reipublicæ Britannicæ, nec vel unum lapidem, præſertim qui fundamenta contingat, ex venerando ædificio dimotum cupient, ne totius molis, ut ſuperiore ſæculo, ruina conſequatur. Multa fecit hic cœtus in redintegranda puriori fide cultuque, reipublicæ cumprimis utilia: hoc ſolo meritus, ut ſemper in poſterum honorifice convocaretur. Quæ porro ſit facturus, vel nunc vel poſthac, quandocunque conceſſa fuerit aliquid agendi facultas, in pejus præjudicari non debet: neque paulo modeſtiores negaturos putem, quin ab eo non pauca in commune bonum fieri poſſent, et a nobis fierent lubenter. Quid quod & interim orientur ab hoc conſeſſu commoda non mediocria? Videbunt cives noſtri in eum intuentes, quinam ſimus, qui eccleſiæ Anglicanæ, Epiſcopi, Decani, Archidiaconi, præſidemus; qualeſque ſibi delegerit Procuratores Clerus parochialis: unde fore confidimus, ut nihil ſibi a nobis extimeſcendum eſſe autument, ſed omnia quæ bona ſunt ſperanda. Congregati preces coram Deo fudimus concorditer: quas quin ille, promiſſi memor, clementer acceperit, nefas eſt dubitare. Hortationi interfuiſtis, pietate pariter ac prudentia ſumma refertæ, quæ etſi multorum aures recitata prætervolaverit, omnium animos lecta inflammabit. Conſilia etiam ſaluberrima præſentes invicem pro re nata communicabimus. Licebit denique Regem uno ore ſuppliciter compellare; noſtram in illum fidem & obſervantiam, in religionem, virtutem, legitimam libertatem, cum civilem tum eccleſiaſticam,

cam, ſtudium teſtari; eoque efficere, ut etiamſi natura atque inſtitutione nunquam non fuerit præconibus veritatis propitius, fiat tamen indies benignior, & ſpretis male feriatorum hominum cavillationibus, quicquid vel factu vel creduti indignum eſt, cohibeat, quantum ſalva unicuique conſcientiæ prærogativa poteſt; *quæcunque* autem ſunt *vera, quæcunque pudica, juſta, ſancta, amabilia, bonæ famæ* *, non ſolum, ut ſemper, exemplo, ſed monitis privatim, edictis publice, animoſe tueatur.

Hæc nihil eſſe, nemo dixerit: ſatis non eſſe, ultro fateor. Diſquiramus igitur, unde quod deeſt poſſit accedere.

Clamabunt extemplo fervidiores, argumentis, obteſtationibus, amicorum deprecatione, purpuratorum gratia, omni machina contendendum, ut quæcunque jura Synodis prioribus fuerunt attributa, iiſdem armetur et hæc, regio mandato: reſuſcitandam demum ejus ope collapſam & emortuam veteris eccleſiæ diſciplinam, atque exercendam ſtrenue; noſtrâ enim nos jam pridem eviluiſſe inertia. Et hi quidem plerumque religioſi ſunt viri, multaque lectione exercitati. Sed parum vident, quid ferant tempora, quove loco ſimus.

Primum adverſarios habemus omnes, non modo qui Deum eſſe aperte negant, quos omni tempore fuiſſe paucos arbitror, ſed eos etiam qui, ut iſte olim, *oratione relinquunt, re tollunt:* & ſub recenti latitantes Deiſtarum nomine, ſi verum eloqui oportet, Athei ſunt. Neque enim numen illud ſuum bonos remunerari, neque improbos punire credunt: unde nullius foret momenti, exiſteret necne. Proinde conſtant in eo ſibi quod nullum ei honorem, vel una vel ſeorſim, quantum ego quidem inaudiverim, exhibeant; & naturæ, quas vocant, leges iis limitibus quiſque circumſcribat, qui lubidini ſuæ optime congruant; eâque forte mutata, confeſtim aliud ſibi juris naturalis corpus effingant, vel exceptiones quaſdam futiles in ſui gratiam excogitent, ut permiſſum videatur quicquid arridet. Licentiam interim, quam ſibi infinitam aſſerunt, adeo gravate cum piis communicant, ut a cultu divino quoſlibet obvios ſannis & convitiis arceant, ſuos vero nonnunquam interdictionibus miniſque; egregii ſcilicet, immo vero, ſi creditis, unici, libertatis vindices.

Cum his fere ſe conjungunt, neque multo ſunt nobis æquiores, qui doctrinam Chriſtianam profitentur quidem, ſed parvi pendunt, aut erroribus contaminant: item qui dignitati

* Phil. iv. 8.

noſtræ invident, aut poſſeſſionibus inhiant. Quot autem univerſi ſint, quantumque conſociati valeant, animus dicere horreſcit.

Jam porro, ut de Pontificiis taceam, qui occultis licet nunc dierum odiis, immortalibus tamen, diligenter ſibi vires idoneum tempus comparant; inter ipſos Reformatos, quid de Diſſentientium, uti vocitantur, Fratrum affectu ſtatuemus? Hos quidem ſpes erat in matris antiquæ gremium ſe propediem recepturos, utpote tandem Epiſcopatum & Liturgiam præſcriptam vel probantes, vel ferri poſſe confitentes, nec amplius innocuis cæremoniis, tanquam larvis, exterritos. Contra vero nuper illorum plures, partim opiniones pravas de variis Fidei Capitibus arripuerunt, partim hoc nobis objiciunt, quod quæ legibus civilibus fundatur Eccleſia, eo ipſo deſiit Chriſto rite ſubeſſe. Unde cum prius videri poteramus in mutuos ruituri amplexus, nunc ex improviſo reſiliunt, diſſidentque longiſſime: nec raro amicitias cum apertis Chriſtiani nominis hoſtibus ſtudioſe colunt, dum nos aſperrime exagitant.

Hi igitur omnes, quos hactenus memoravi, ſtatim ut aliquid aggredi cœpimus, cuncta clamoribus opplebunt, aliud Synodum præ ſe ferre, aliud meditari dictitabunt, affectatæ tyrannidis dicam ſcribent, patulis multorum auribus, quæ ſibi imaginantur, facile infundent; atque etiam quæ ipſi non credunt, aliis perſuadebunt. Etenim ſunt mire propenſi homines, alioquin haud mali, ad ſuſpiciones adverſum nos fovendas; quæ cum antehac (nam fatendum eſt,) aliquatenus juſtæ fuerint, nimium tenaci reconduntur uſque memoria, nec abſque diuturno labore eximentur.

Verum obſepta eſt et aliis obſtaculis via. Non adeo multa ſane, quod mihi quidem conſtat, prompta habemus, quæ in Synodo proponantur: eaque brevi ſpatio poſſemus ad exitum perducere. Sed cum primum rumor percrebuerit ad negotia tractanda nos accingi, plurimas illico plurimi molitiones inſtituent, ſuum quiſque commentum invitis ingerens; mille opinionum obtrudentur monſtra, mille ſpecioſæ, aut ne ſpecioſæ quidem, rerum novandarum formulæ, quædam a malevolis, quædam ab indoctis aut rudibus, quædam etiam a cordatioribus ipſis: et quod hic neceſſarium, ille exitabile eſſe pronunciabit. Hæc omnia ſi rejicimus oblata, ſuperbum videbitur: ſi ſumimus dijudicanda, in infinitum res abibit: quoquo nos vertamus, gravem offenſionem concitabimus; nec tandem fortaſſe quidquam decernere,

aut

aut ſi decernimus obtinere ut ratum ſit, valebimus. Non ſum neſcius morem antiquitus fuiſſe ſententiarum varietates Synodorum decretis reprimere: ſed cum Synodi, ſed cum Clerici ſeparatim, pondus haberent, quo nunc plane carent. Nam hodie quidem plurimis ludus eſt, immo etiam honori ſibi ducunt, nos petulanter fruſtrari, quanquam nec oderint, nec metuant: quod longe acrius aggredientur, cum intermiſſa diu conſilia renovari intellexerint.

Dicet quis forſan, Regem ſalutis publicæ & fidei Chriſtianæ ſtudioſiſſimum, ſi minus ultro, ſaltem admonitum, certe ornaturum nos rerum conſtituendarum poteſtate, & adverſus improborum machinationes in tuto collocaturum. Et quidem talem ovanti patriæ divinitus contigeſſe ex imo pectore vobis gratulor; Deumque veneror ut poſſit, quod velle ſcio, in religionis amorem ſuos accendere, & ordini noſtro debitum honorem conciliare. Sed nec poteſt omnia, nec inopportuno tempore quidpiam adoriętur, nec iis inconſultis, quorum ſpectata fide & ſapientia merito nititur. Jam hi, bene quidem nobis volunt, ut nemo poſſit melius: ſed rerum ſuarum, hac præſertim tempeſtate, ſatagunt; & inde noſtris (nam quid apud vos parcam proloqui?) aliquanto minus dedunt ſe, quam optandum eſſet. Metuunt nempe, ne ſi res bellicas eccleſiaſticis cumulent, obruantur negotiorum multitudine. Metuunt etiam, ne quid a nobis, ne quid ſaltem ab aliis, turbetur. Juſto timidiores, vel ſane ſegniores, forſan putabitis, qui talia cauſentur. Nec intercedo. Habent tamen illa ſpeciem aliquam, qua ſi capiantur iſti, non eſt nimis indignandum. Et dum ſolenne illud ſuum identidem occentant, *quieta non movenda*, mirum ni aſſentiatur princeps juvenis, magis aliquando ſibi nobiſque ſiſurus.

Quin fingamus conceſſam, quæ expetitur, facultatem. Si pauca tantum, eaque leviora complecteretur, multi nos magno conatu nihil agere dicerent: et cum vel minimis aliquod tempus dandum ſit, noſtrûm non exiguus numerus domum pertæſi dilaberentur, relicta Synodo infrequente & inhonorata. Quod ſi multa & gravia demandarentur, alii nihil reſtare integrum clamitarent; & poſſet evenire, ut in partes ipſi diſtraheremur. Spero equidem, & amplam ſpei materiam præbet aſpectus veſter, ſic nos affectos eſſe, ut ardentiores lenioribus, expertis rerum inexperti, ſe velint ſubmittere, nemo temere, aut ſeorſim quidquam inceptare, nemo pertinaciter urgere

gere periculosa vel suspecta. Sed nescio an hæc omnia spondere quis ausit: quæ tamen si minus præstabimus, quandocunque arcessemur in commune consulturi, opinionum discrepantium conflictu incendentur iræ, scindemur in studia contraria, lateque a nobis manabunt in publicum discordiæ. Hujusmodi multa in civilibus comitiis impune fiunt: in nostris fiebant olim: nunc nemo ferret. Undique incursarent, undique impeterent nos; nec mora, pro imperio ediceret, qui possunt, finem hisce dissidiis actutum quoquo modo esse imponendum. Abrumpenda esset repente tela exorsa; conquererentur bonorum non pauci nostra culpa nihil successisse, sed omnia deteriora facta; & salse deriderent nos quotquot sunt alieni, vel a Christiana fide, vel ab hierarchia Anglicana. Quinetiam si nullæ lites orirentur, eo certius malignitatem & livorem quorundam exstimularemus. Nam qui maxime dissensionum nos accusant, minime eadem sentire, & bene rem gerere cupiunt.

His de causis, tametsi prorsus arbitrii nostri esset ad negotia capessenda statim convolare, quid prudentiores existimarent, haud dexerim; ego ampliandum censerem.

Quid ergo? Jubeone vos de Synodo actuosa, deque Ecclesiæ statu per eam emendando, desperare? Absit vero. Semper enitendum est, ut antiqui regiminis non modo retineamus formam, sed et vim instauremus, quatenus vel divino vel humano jure fulcitur. Atque interim manca quodammodo et mutila erit πολιτεια nostra. Hoc tantum caveri velim, ne, quod fieri, vel tuto fieri, nequit, exoptemus; ne audacibus & calidis inceptis faveamus; ne laqueis implicemur, unde expedire nos erit difficile. Hoc tantum commoneo, lentis passibus esse procedendum, cuncta circumspectanda, impedimenta sedulo amolienda, & substernenda diligenter meditatæ structuræ firma fundamenta. Non est igitur oratio mea procrastinantis, eludendi causa, sed in justum tempus differentis. Erit etiam, bona cum venia vestra, præcipientis quo pacto maturabitur quod avemus.

Permagni ad hoc propositum interest, ut simus ipsi, quosque pascimus greges efficiamus, quantum res patitur, unanimes, potissimum in fide salutari. Sunt enim qui se nostros vocant, nihilo tamen secius multa quæ docemus improbant; speciatim, quæ ad S. S. Trinitatem pertinent, ad Redemptionem generis humani, ad illapsum Gratiæ cœlestis in mentes fidelium. Jam vero

vero ſi longius proſerpſerit error ſententiam de his receptam repudiantium; vel ſi invaleſcant qui comminiſcuntur, præter horum perſuaſionem, bonorum operum feracem, neceſſariam eſſe fiduciam favoris apud Deum, ſenſibus imis infixam ſuperne, quæ omnem dubitationem tollat: controverſiis aſſiduis vexabimur; ad Synodos cum effectu celebrandas, *non in melius*, ut Apoſtoli verbis utar, *ſed in deterius conveniemus* *. Nec ſolum conquaſſabitur, tandemque diſſolvetur hujus Eccleſiæ pulcherrima compages; quin etiam corrumpetur integritas vitalis doctrinæ, ſiquidem ego, diu perpenſis & ſubductis, ancipiti quondam animo, rationibus, verum diſcernere valeo.

Sunt autem porro, qui ſe minime de Fide a nobis diſſentire, aut affirmant, aut videri volunt, ſed æquum cenſent omnibus placita quæcunque propugnantibus ad menſam euchariſticam, atque adeo ad ſacros ordines, aditum patere, modo in Chriſtum ſe credere profiteantur. Sed hoc profeſſi ſunt olim Hæreticorum peſtilentiſſimi: ne dicam hodie quadantenus profiteri Mohammedanos. Admittantur ergo, aiunt, ii ſoli, qui ſacras ſcripturas venerantur, ejuſque verbis animorum ſenſa declarare ſunt parati. Quid vero? Pontificii, Tremulorum ſecta, innumerarum ineptiarum fautores, nonne in id ſunt parati? Hoſne ergo omnes honore fungendi apud nos Sacerdotii dignantur? Sin minus; cur alios, pari ratione repellendos?

Verum hoc ſaltem Candidatis urgent concedendum, ut ſuis, non alienis verbis ſatisfaciant Eccleſiæ Rectoribus: quod et antiquitus uſu veniſſe monent. Atque ita ſæpe diuque factum non negamus; ſed idcirco, & merito quidem, fieri deſiiſſe credimus, quod ſic Epiſcoporum quiſque, vel oratione ſubdola, cui diſcutiendæ ſpatium non eſſet, facile falli potuerit, vel pro arbitrio recte ſentientibus viam intercludere, prave ſentientes admittere: quodque hinc neceſſe fuerit frequenter evenire, ut eundem hic reſpueret, ille amplecteretur, et diſceptandis litibus inde oriundis una Synodus haud ſufficeret.

Eſto igitur, idoneos Articulos Fidei in auxilium vocandos: at certe noſtros recoquendos, & incudi reddendos, non pauci contendent. Nec diffitemur potuiſſe quædam aptius enunciari, et adverſus tam argutias quam hallucinationes melius muniri. Sed præclare, ut illis temporibus, inſtructa & compoſita

* 1 Cor. xi. 17.

fita ſunt omnia: egentque hodie tantum explicatione commoda: non vafram & veteratoriam intelligo, ſed artis grammaticæ criticæque regulis conſonam. Nec leve eſt periculum, ne qui, integris manentibus Articulis, nos ab eorum vera mente deſciviſſe jactitant, ἑτεροδοξίας crimen atrociori longe clamore, triſtiorique eventu impingant, ſi medicas iis manus, tanquam maleſanis, adhibeamus.

Et hæc eadem velim ſibi in memoriam revocent, qui Liturgiam item recenſeri reformarique flagitant. Ornatior quidem, accuratior, plenior, brevior, et poteſt ea fieri & debet: ſed modeſta tractatione, ſed tranquillis hominum animis; non temerariis, qualia vidimus & videmus, auſis, non inter media diſſidia, mutuaſque ſuſpiciones.

Verum ut de his ſtatuatur, novam ſaltem Scripturæ verſionem deſiderari, plurimis videtur: nempe ut populus Chriſtianus ea luce fruatur, quæ favente Numine oraculis divinis per continuas virorum doctorum vigilias affulſit, hiſce 150 annis proxime elapſis, ante quos confecta eſt Anglica Vulgata. Et quis refragetur honeſtiſſimæ petitioni? Sed ad hoc opus poſt conquiſitum undique omnigenæ eruditionis apparatum demum accedendum eſt; atque in eo verſandum ſumma religione, cautela, induſtria, cura porro inter multos amiciſſime conſpirantes, per longum tempus, diſpertita. Prodeunt quotidie certatim interpretes: ſed fere proletarii, vel quorum ſupervacanea diligentia incertiores multo ſumus quam dudum. Reviviſcit linguæ ſanctæ perquam neceſſaria cognitio: ſed juſtas vires nondum acquiſivit, & ſomniis ſuis ſe oblectant quidam ejus cultores. Expectandum ideo, ſi aliquid operâ dignum facere volumus, donec hi aut reſipuerint, aut erroris manifeſti ſint, donec deferbuerit novorum ſenſuum eruendorum æſtus, & nupera hæc pene dixeram rabies emendandi, qua impelluntur ut mendis imprudenter referciant codicem ſacrum homines probi, nec ineruditi; donec denique exitum aliquem habeat laudandum apprime inſtitutum conferendi inter ſe, & cum primævis interpretationibus, Veteris Teſtamenti libros Hebraice ſcriptos.

Ego ſane in omnibus, de quibus dixi, labores vel maximos, quantum patitur ingraveſcens & jam fere præceps ætas, pro Eccleſiæ bono, non detrectem, nec offenſiones reformidem. Sed minime velim eorum ſuſcipiendorum auctor eſſe, unde magis gliſcant

gliſcant nimiæ jampridem rixæ. Nam his vigentibus protelabitur uſque Synodi conventus efficax, ne nobis permiſſi bella inteſtina ſuſcitemus, publicis commodis nocitura. Quod ſi ſemel ſatis concordes videamur, minuetur iſte, qui penitus, quanquam injuria, in virorum ſummorum animis inſedit, metus: quem et omnino depulſum fore ſperari poteſt, modo palam faciamus nos in omnes, utcunque diverſa ſentientes, benevole animatos eſſe, ut quidem ſumus. Quotuſquiſque enim eſt noſtrum, quin hanc rem ſic ſecum reputet? "Errat quiſ-" piam; mirum ni et ego: ſed aut vocabulo tantum, aut ſi " re, innoxiè. Errat vehementer: ſed non continuo eſt Hæ-" reticus. Hæreticus eſt: ſed Chriſtianus tamen. Ne Chriſ-" tianus quidem: ſed Homo ſaltem. Homo malus forſitan: " ſed qui poterit in melius mutari. Fac denique non poſſe: " Deus vindicabit." Nec idcirco aut flagitiis inquinati, aut ſanorum verborum formulæ pertinaciter adverſantes, non ſunt a cœtu piorum ſegregandi. Sed in metiorem partem, tum dictis, tum factis, eſt propendendum: nec eadem nobis homuncionibus, quæ Apoſtolis falli neſciis fuit, auctoritas arroganda eſt. Etenim longe tutius erit ſinere ut zizania tantiſper cum tritico ſuccreſcant, quam eos ejicere, quos tandem Judex communis, magno cum noſtro dedecore, poſtliminio reſtituent. Et qui ſeverius agi poſtulant, imbecillitatis ſuæ ſunt immemores: nec vident quod eſt apertiſſimum, hac via periculoſe concuſſum, forſan etiam everſum, iri, quam ſtabilitum eunt Eccleſiam.

Nec tamen, ut gaudeamus tranquillitate, rerum theologicarum ſtudia ſunt remittenda: ſed excitanda ex diuturno quo languent torpore. Non eſt hæc ætas noſtra legendis, præſertim antiquioribus, aut gravioris argumenti, libris, nedum attentæ cogitationi, vel ſcriptioni operoſæ, ſatis dedita. Olim tractatibus omnium generum, doctrina, judicio, acumine conſpicuis, inclaruimus: nunc non exaruit quidem, ſed areſcit, uberrimus ille laudum fons. Olim contra Infideles, Pontificios, oppugnatores quoſcunque, ſumma cum gloria militavimus: quorum venenatis voluminibus, domi foriſque affatim editis, nunc parum aut nihil reponimus: unde illis famæ celebritas, & diſcipulorum multitudo; nobis opprobrium. Nec utique exiſtimabitur illos, quorum pauci quidquam ſeparatim præſtant, multum præſtituros in Synodum convocatos. Video quid poſſit obtendi: & ſponte fateor, proſpiciendum eſſe, nam

concreditum eſt, nobis qui dicimur Beneficiorum Patroni, ne eruditæ diligentiæ præmia deſint. Dandum ſane aliquid hac in re, ut in omnibus, cognationi, honeſtis miniſteriis, precibus amicorum, potentiorum commendationibus, juſſa verius vocaverim: ſed nullatenus tantum, vel ut mali, vel plane inhabiles, admittantur ad ſacra munia, vel neglecti jaceant boni & litterati. Quod utinam plures ſe exhiberent, qui ſtudiis rectè poſitis, et eorum fructibus in lucem prolatis, omnem nobis excuſationem præriperent, ſi quando in minus merentes largius æquo ſimus benefici.

Quanto autem quis eſt vel doctrina ornatior, vel conditione ſuperior, tanto oportebit, hoc potiſſimum ſæculo, ut ſe gerat ſubmiſſius. Officii paſtoralis dignitatem, in qua conſtituti ſumus, aſſidue ſuſpicere & tueri debemus: verum ſi amplificare aggredimur inſcite, imminuemus non mediocriter. Neque eccleſiaſtica, neque civilia, quibus potimur, abjudicare jura, aut licet aut expedit: nam qui illis noſmet ultro exuentes collaudare nos non deſinent, exutos ridebunt. Sed ſi juſtam auctoritatem conſervare volumus, ante omnia cavendum eſt, ne immodicam vindicemus. Alioquin magis atque magis in anguſtum coercebimur: et demum exilis illa, quæ reſtat, umbra regiminis eripietur, ſumma cum plurimorum aſpernatione.

Nec indecore appetentes erimus, (modo ſapere, et bene audire, atque adhiberi ſeriis negotiis cordi eſt) aut dulcis lucelli, aut gradus cujuſlibet altioris. Non ſunt, experto credite, non ſunt tanti vel honores vel reditus ampliſſimi Eccleſiaſticis deſtinati, ut a quopiam enixe cupiantur. Multum habent ſollicitudinis, non parum forſan invidiæ; veræ delectationis nihil, niſi quoties occurrit, occurrit autem raro inſignis, benefaciendi occaſio.

Voluptates, etiam honeſtiores, parcè uſurpare, nec a vituperandis tantummodo, ſed a contemnendis vel parvi faciendis, abſtinere ſe, ad exiſtimationem Clericorum intereſt quam maxime. Si quos e nobis videant Laici, potionum & ciborum lautitiis indulgentes, corporis cultui & veſtium elegantiæ præter modum addictos, in facetias & riſum perpetuo ſolutos, mulierc.larum chartis luſoriis continenter inhiantium circulis & feſſiunculis permixtos, vel inter quaſcunque nugas inerti otio fugaces horas diſperdentes, nunquam ſe perſuaderi ſinent, ut ex frequentiſſimo talium concilio boni quidpiam proficiſci poſſe

ſperent:

ſperent: quales tamen ſi aliquot noſtrûm comperiant, cæteros ejuſdem farinæ libenter ſibe fingent.

Sed minime ſatis erit vitam agere cætera inculpatam, niſi in docendo quoque Evangelio, quod munus eſt noſtrum, parvi & ampli gnaviter elaboremus. Quo effrænatius luxuriantur errores & vitia, quo laxior eſt Eccleſiæ diſciplina, quo leniór adminiſtratio Reipublicæ, eo diligentiorem adhiberi oportet in fide & preceptis Chriſtianis inſtitutionem: & incaſſum ad induſtriam hortabimur Sacerdotes inferioris ordinis, niſi exemplo præeamus. Potuimus non ita pridem impetrare, ut delinquentes in bonos mores Magiſtratui pœnas darent; ut libri impii & impudici e medio tollerentur: nunc illud ægre conceditur; hoc, ſciens loquor, neutiquam. Eſt ideo vel ſola vi argumentorum, præſertim in ſacris concionibus, obſiſtendum adverſariis, vel cedendum loco. Et cum præter adverſarios veteres, novi & domeſtici nuper ex ipſo Academiarum noſtratium ſinu proſiluerint, qui ſe ſolos æternæ ſalutis tramitem commonſtrare, nos in perniciem cæcorum more evagari, paſſim prædicant, curatiſſime diſpiciendum eſt, ut recto curſu veritatis viam inſiſtamus; horum nec aſtutiis illecti, nec timore perculſi, nec odio flagrantes: cavendum, ne, ſi illi ſermones ſuos ad vulgi captum nimis acommodant, ac demittunt, nos hoc nimis dedignemur; ne, ſi illi ſunt juſto vehementiores, nos frigidi videamur, & affectuum piorum expertes: ne ſi illi efficaciam Fidei immorderatè cum maximo fidelium periculo extollunt, nos non minori ingrate eam deprimamus & extenuemus; ne ſi illi inania viſa et phantaſmata pro certis pignoribus Remiſſionis Peccatorum habent, nos in genuinum Spiritus Sancti teſtimonium ſimus imprudenter contumelioſi.

Egone igitur Clerum Anglicanum officii vel male intellecti, vel male præſtiti, tecte inſimulo? Deus meliora. Qui poteſt ut vituperem quos diligo et revereor; quorum plurimorum, cum vita functorum tum ſuperſtitum, amicitia diu gaviſus ſum; & exempla mihi quotidie ob oculos pono, ut ad recte vivendum docendumque me erigam & confirmem? Sed vos auditoribus veſtris, etiamſi ſumma laude dignis, monitiones tamen ſollicite ingeritis. Nam vel ſapientes Virgines dormitâſſe legimus*: *theſaurum* evangelicum *in vaſis fictilibus habemus:*

* Matth. xxv 5.

*mus**: & difficile eſt a moribus hodiernis aliquid contagionis & labis non trahere. Ignoſcat Pater miſericors, quod Parœciis primo, deinde Diœceſibus mihi ordine commiſſis, minus intente & perite, quam oportuerat, invigilaverim! Ignoſcat pariter, ſi quid ſimile cuiquam veſtrum contigerit! Illud autem ſtatuamus univerſi, aucto ſollicite ſtudio, compenſare pro virili (nunquam enim fiet ſatis) quicquid peccavimus: idque eo certe potiſſimum, ut nos Deo commendemus; partim vero etiam, ut hominibus.

Neque enim ferent in Clericis illa, quorum facile ſibi invicem dant veniam. Quod ſi *nobis & doctrinæ*, ex Apoſtoli præcepto, *attendamus*†; nequit fieri, quin gradatim in altum recreſcat exiſtimatio noſtra; quin perſpiciant quotidie clarius, quibus rerum habenæ ſunt traditæ, quot quantiſque in rebus operâ noſtra uti poſſunt; quin tandem non modo concedant, verum et Reipublicæ cauſa invitent rogentque, ut quæ eccleſiæ deſunt communi conſilio ſuppleamus. Longa quidem eſt hæc via atque ardua: ſed eſt ad ea quæ volumus, aut velle debemus, unica; & quas fortaſſe indicabunt alii compendiarias, in ſalebroſos ducunt et præcipites locos. His artibus floruerunt primorum ſæculorum Doctores: his iiſdem nobis ſidendum eſt: aliarum ope non dabitur in honore eſſe: vel ſi maxime daretur, aliarum ope nec inſerviremus hominum utilitati, nec æternam vitam conſequeremur.

Tarde et cunctanter credo, quicquid faciemus, de nobis honorificè plerique ſentient. Iracundæ tamen querimoniæ multum abèrit ut proficiant; quorundam animos malevolo gaudio perfundent; alios movebunt, ut quos contemnunt, etiam oderint. Accuſati viciſſim accuſabunt: et coram iniquis judicibus cauſa nobis erit decenda. Nec ſane proderit vehemens negotiorum civilium tractandorum ſtudium conſpiciendum dare. Ferventiorem enim hancce cupiditatem, ad privata ſpectare emolumenta, non ad communia, perhibebunt ſuſpicaces & maligni, vulgus credet. Quæ noſtra ſunt ergo rite peragentes, eventum, quem daturus eſt Deus, tranquille expectemus. Viros bonos colamus, quamvis minime nobiſcum in omnibus conſentiant: impiis ne ſocii quidem ſimus, nedum adulatores; nec tamen temere offenſiones demus, ſed neceſſariam

* 2 Cor. iv. 7. † 1 Tim. iv. 16.

riam reprehenſionum injucunditatem verborum humanitate mitigemus; modicum aliis non inviti permittamus illorum uſum, licita modo ſint, quæ ipſi non attingimus: ab omni concertatione longiſſime abhorreamus: injurias & opprobria toleranter patiamur: favore, ex quacunque demum parte affulſerit, utamur modeſte. Hoc modo nec novas contrahemus inimicitias, et majorum delicta aut non luemus amplius, aut luemus immeriti.

In utramque idcirco partem parati ſimus. Rerum ſacrarum, et, quotquot aliquo vinculo cum his connexæ ſunt, civilium, ſcientia ſic nos inſtruamus, quaſi brevi eſſemus de quæſtionibus graviſſimis deliberationes habituri: compoſiti tamen interim ad ſummam æquitatem & manſuetudinem, ſi vel in longiſſimum diem ſpes illa prorogetur: qua ſi penitus fruſtremur, dolebimus quidem ſæculi, male et ſibi conſulentis, & nobis gratiam referentis, ſive iniquitatem ſive incogitantiam; hoc vero noſtrâ culpa non obtigiſſe, toto pectore lætabimur; nec ſpernendum nihilominus per nos incrementum capiet res Chriſtiana. In Synodo ſententiam non dicemus; ſed ſeorſim conſtanter quod verum atque decens propugnabimus. Canones non condemus; ſed ut omnes omnia ſua ad Canonem Sacri Fœderis exigant, tam verbis quam exemplo ſuadebimus. Anathematum fulminibus heterodoxos non feriemus: (atque utinam ab odioſis ejuſmodi & appellationibus & inceptis temperaviſſent ſibi Deceſſores noſtri:) ſed *cum modeſtia*, Divo Paulo edicente, *corripiemus eos qui reſiſtunt, ne quando Deus det illis pœnitentiam ad cognoſcendam veritatem**. In Clericos vitiis contaminatos aut vecordes non exercebimus communiter cenſuram: ſed ne locum inveniant apud nos, cura privata quantum licet præcavebimus. Libros infames carbone haud notabimus, unde avidius legerentur; ſed accurate refellemus. Et quamvis dubio careret, indies imminutam his in oris, atque tandem extinctam, fore cœleſtem Evangelii lucem: illachrymandum quidem eſſet popularibus noſtris mifere pereuntibus; in voluntate tamen divina non gravatim acquieſcendum. Quid enim Propheta? *In vacuum laboravi, & vane fortitudinem meam conſumpſi: ergò judicium meum cum Domino, & opus meum cum Deo meo*†.

Condonate

* 2 Tim. ii. 25. † Eſai. xlix. 4.

Condonate mihi, Patres Fratreſque, longi hujus alloquii tædium; ex hac Cathedra nunc primum, nunc itidem poſtremum, (ſic enim præſagit mens, & veriſimile eſt) vos compellanti. *Tuque, omnipotens et ſempiterne Deus, cujus Spiritu univerſum eccleſiæ corpus regitur ſanctumque efficitur, ſupplicationes & preces noſtras, pro cujuſcunque ordinis hominibus, qui in Eccleſiam tuam cooptantur, oblatas tibi admitte; ut quiſque, ſicut ſuæ convenit vocationi & miniſterio, tibi ſincere & pie ſerviat, per Dominum & Servatorem noſtrum Jeſum Chriſtum.* Amen *.

* Collect. 2. Paraſcev.

LEC-

LECTURES.

LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTION.

IN all matters of importance, every one that wants information, ſhould firſt ſeek for it, then attend to it: and the more our happineſs depends upon judging and acting right in any caſe, the more care and pains we ſhould take to qualify ourſelves for both. Now the happineſs of all perſons depends beyond compariſon chiefly on being truly religious. For true religion conſiſts in three things; reaſonable government of ourſelves, good behaviour towards our fellow-creatures, and dutifulneſs to our Maker: the practice of which will give us, for the moſt part, health of body and eaſe of mind, a comfortable proviſion of neceſſaries, and peace with all around us; but however, will always ſecure to us, what is infinitely more valuable ſtill, the favour and bleſſing of God; who, on theſe terms, will both watch over us continually with a fatherly kindneſs in this life, and beſtow on us eternal felicity in the next.

Since, therefore, whoever is religious muſt be happy, the great concern of every one of us is to know and obſerve the doctrines and rules which religion delivers. Now we all come into the world ignorant of theſe; and our faculties are ſo weak at firſt, and gain ſtrength ſo ſlowly; and the attention of our early years to ſerious things is ſo ſmall, that even were our duty to comprehend no more than our own reaſon could teach us, few, if any, would learn it ſufficiently without aſſiſtance;

and

and none ſo ſoon as they would need it. They would come out into a world full of dangers, every way unprepared for avoiding them; would go wrong in the very beginning of life, perhaps fatally: at leaſt would hurt, if they did not ruin themſelves; and make their return into the right path certainly difficult, and probably late.

But we muſt conſider yet further, that reaſon, were it improved to the utmoſt, cannot diſcover to us all that we are to believe and do: but a large and moſt important part of it is to be learnt from the revelation made to us in God's holy word. And this, though perfectly well ſuited to purpoſes for which it was deſigned, yet being originally delivered at very diſtant times, to very different ſorts of perſons, on very different occaſions; and the ſeveral articles of faith and precepts of conduct, which it preſcribes, not being collected and laid down methodically in any one part of it, but diſperſed with irregular beauty through the whole, as the riches of nature are through the creation; the informations of the more knowing muſt be in many reſpects needful, to prepare the more ignorant for receiving the benefits, of which they are capable from reading the ſcripture. And particularly, giving them beforehand a ſummary and orderly view of the principal points comprehended in it, will qualify them better than any other thing to diſcern its true meaning, ſo far as is requiſite, in each part.

Therefore, both in what reaſon of itſelf dictates, and what God hath added to it, inſtruction is neceſſary, eſpecially for beginners. And indeed, as they are never left to find out by their own abilities any other ſort of uſeful knowledge, but always helped, if poſſible; it would be very ſtrange, if, in the moſt important kind, the ſame care at leaſt were not taken.

But beſides enlightening the ignorance of perſons, inſtruction doth equal, if not greater, ſervice, by preventing or oppoſing their prejudices and partialities. From our tendereſt age we have our wrong inclinations, and are very prone to form wrong notions in ſupport of them; both which we are extremely backward to acknowledge, and very apt to model our religion in ſuch manner as to leave room for our faults. Now right explanations clearly delivered, and right admonitions preſſed home, in early days, may preſerve perſons from

thus deceiving themſelves, and guard them againſt future, as well as preſent dangers. Nay, though ſlighted, and ſeemingly forgotten for a time, they may ſtill keep ſecretly ſuch a hold upon the mind as will ſooner or later bring thoſe back, who would elſe never have ſeen, or never have owned, that they had loſt their way.

But a ſtill further advantage of inſtruction is, that bringing frequently before perſons eyes thoſe truths on which otherwiſe they would ſeldom reflect, though ever ſo much convinced of them, it keeps the thoughts of their duty continually at hand, to reſiſt the temptations with which they are attacked. Thus their lives and their minds are inſenſibly formed to be ſuch as they ought; and being thus *trained up in the way wherein they ſhould go*, there is great hope, that *they will not* afterwards *depart from it* *.

Nor doth reaſon only, but experience too, ſhow the need of timely inſtitution in piety and virtue. For is it not viſible, that principally for want of it, multitudes of unhappy creatures, in all ranks of life, ſet out from the firſt in ſin, and follow it on as ſecurely, as if it were the only way they had to take; do unſpeakable miſchief in the world, and utterly undo themſelves, body and ſoul: whilſt others, of no better natural diſpoſitions, but only better taught, are harmleſs and uſeful, eſteemed and honoured, go through life with comfort, and meet death with joyful hope? There are doubtleſs, in ſuch numbers, exceptions on both ſides; but this is undeniably the ordinary, the probable, the always to be expected courſe of things. Therefore ſeriouſly conſider, will you deſpiſe religious knowledge, and be like the former miſerable wretches? or will you embrace it, and be happy with the latter, here and to eternity.

But it is not ſufficient that you be willing to receive inſtruction, unleſs they alſo, to whom that care belongs, are willing to give it. Now the care of giving it belongs to different perſons in different caſes. In the caſe of children, it uſually belongs, in a peculiar degree, to their parents; who, having been the means of bringing them into the world, are moſt ſtrongly bound to endeavour that their being may prove a benefit, not a cauſe of lamentation to them; and having been

* Prov. xxii. 6.

endued by Heaven with tender affections towards them, will be doubly ſinners againſt them, if they are guilty of that worſt of cruelty, not teaching them their duty: without which alſo, and it deſerves a very ſerious conſideration, they can no more hope for comfort in them here, than for acceptance with God hereafter. And therefore, both the Old Teſtament directed the Jews, to *teach their children diligently the words which God had commanded them* *; and the New enjoins Chriſtians to *bring up theirs in the nurture and admonition of the Lord* †. Sometimes indeed want of leiſure, ſometimes of knowledge and ability, obliges parents to commit part, it may be a conſiderable one, of the inſtruction of their children to other perſons. But far from being ever diſcharged of the whole burthen, they muſt always remember, that unleſs they aſſiſt and enforce what others endeavour, it will ſeldom produce any valuable effect; and much leſs, if ſome of the things, which their children hear them ſay, and ſee them do almoſt every day, are directly contrary to thoſe, which they pretend they would have them believe and learn.

The perſons on whom uſually this care is devolved by parents, are maſters and miſtreſſes of ſchools, and afterwards tutors in colleges, who ought never to omit furniſhing children, amongſt other knowledge, plentifully with that which is the moſt neceſſary of all; but conſtantly to employ the influence which they have on their minds, and the knowledge which they acquire of their tempers, in exciting them to good, and preſerving them from evil, as much as they can: And parents ought firſt abſolutely to require this of them, and then examine diligently from time to time whether it be done. But eſpecially maſters and miſtreſſes of charity-ſchools, which are founded purpoſely to give the children of the poor an early and deep tincture of religion and virtue, ſhould look upon it as by far their principal buſineſs to teach them, not merely outward obſervances and forms of good words, but ſuch an inward ſenſe and love of their duty to God and man, as may ſecure them, if poſſible, from that lamentable depravity, into which the lower part of the world is falling; and which it is highly the intereſt of their ſuperiors, if they would but underſtand their intereſt, to reſtrain and correct.

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* Deut. vi. 6, 7. † Eph. vi. 4.

As the care of children belongs to their parents and teachers; ſo doth that of ſervants to the heads of the families in which they live. And therefore it is mentioned in ſcripture by God himſelf, as a diſtinguiſhing part of the character of a good man, *that he will command his houſehold to keep the way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment* *. For indeed it is a ſtrong and requiſite proof of reverence to our Maker, as well as of kindneſs to them, and concern for our own intereſt, to direct them in the way of their duty, or procure them the direction of good books and good advice; to exhort them to the more private exerciſes of religion; to contrive leiſure for them to attend the appointed ſolemn ones, which is plainly one part of *giving them*, as the Apoſtle requires, *what is juſt and equal* †; and to ſee that the leiſure, allowed them for that purpoſe, be honeſtly ſo employed, and not abuſed.

For, after all, the moſt valuable inſtruction for ſervants, for children, for all perſons, is the public one of the church, which our Saviour himſelf hath promiſed to bleſs with his preſence ‡. And therefore it is a rule of inexpreſſible moment: *Gather the people together; men, women, and children, and thy ſtranger that is within thy gates: that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God; and obſerve to do all the words of his law: and that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live* §.

Whoever elſe may fail of doing their duty, we, the miniſters of Chriſt, muſt not fail to *be inſtant in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon* ‖; to feed the young with *the ſincere milk of the word* ¶, and *preach the goſpel to the poor* *. It is the peculiar glory of Chriſtianity, to have extended religious inſtruction, of which but few partook at all before, and ſcarce any in purity, thro' all ranks and ages of men and even women. The firſt converts to it were immediately formed into regular ſocieties and aſſemblies; not only for the joint worſhip of God, but the further *edifying of the body of Chriſt* †: in which good work, ſome of courſe were ſtated teachers, or, to uſe the Apoſtle's own expreſſion, *catechizers in the word*; others, taught or catechized.

* Gen. xviii. 19. † Coloſ. iv. 1. ‡ Matth. xviii. 20.
§ Deut. xxxi. 12, 13. ‖ 2 Tim. iv. 2. ¶ 1 Pet. ii. 2.
* Matth. xi. 5. † Eph. iv. 12.

techized *. For catechizing ſignifies in ſcripture, at large, inſtructing perſons in any matter, but eſpecially in religion. And thus it is uſed, Acts xviii. 25. where you read, *This man was inſtructed in the way of the Lord*; and Luke i. 4. where again you read, *That thou mayeſt know the certainty of thoſe things, wherein thou haſt been inſtructed*. The original word, in both places, is *catechized*.

But as the different advances of perſons in knowledge made different ſorts of inſtructions requiſite; ſo in the primitive church, different ſorts of teachers were appointed to diſpenſe it. And they who taught ſo much only of the Chriſtian doctrine, as might qualify the hearers for Chriſtian communion, had the name of Catechiſts appropriated to them: whoſe teaching being uſually, as was moſt convenient, in a great meaſure by way of queſtion and anſwer; the name of Catechiſm hath now been long confined to ſuch inſtruction, as is given in that form. But the method of employing a particular ſet of men in that work only, is in moſt places laid aſide. And I hope you will not be loſers, if they who are appointed to the higher miniſtries of the church attend to this alſo.

Under the darkneſs of Popery almoſt all religious inſtruction was neglected. *Very few*, to uſe the words of one of our Homilies, *even of the moſt ſimple people, were taught the Lord's Prayer, the Articles of the Faith, or the ten commandments, otherwiſe than in Latin, which they underſtood not* †; ſo that one of the firſt neceſſary ſteps taken towards the Reformation, in this country, was a general injunction, that parents and maſters ſhould firſt learn them in their own tongue, then acquaint their children and ſervants with them ‡: which three main branches of Chriſtian duty, comprehending the ſum of what we are to believe, to do, and to petition for, were ſoon after formed, with proper explanations of each, into a catechiſm. To this was added, in proceſs of time, a brief account of the two ſacraments; all together making up that very good, though ſtill improveable, *Form of ſound words* §, which we now uſe.

And that it may be uſed effectually, the laws of the land, both eccleſiaſtical and civil, require not only miniſters to inſtruct their pariſhioners in it, but parents, and maſters and miſtreſſes

* Gal. vi. 6. † Homily againſt Rebellion, part 6.

‡ See Wake's Dedication of his Commentary on the Church Catechiſm.

§ 2 Tim. i. 13.

miſtreſſes of families, to ſend their children and ſervants to be inſtructed; meaning evidently, unleſs they made ſome other more convenient proviſion to anſwer the ſame end. For promoting religious knowledge and practice is not only the expreſs deſign of all church government, but a matter (would God it were well conſidered) of great importance to the ſtate alſo: ſince neither private life can be happy, nor the public welfare ſecure for any long time, without that belief of the doctrines and obſervance of the duties of Chriſtianity, for which catechizing the young and ignorant lays the firmeſt foundation.

It muſt be owned, the Catechiſm of our Church is, as it ought to be, ſo clear in the main, as to need but little explaining, all things conſidered. But then it is alſo, as it ought to be, ſo ſhort, as to leave much room for ſetting forth the particulars comprehended under its general heads; for confirming both theſe by reaſon and ſcripture; and for imprinting the whole on the conſciences and affections of the learners. This therefore I ſhall endeavour to do in the ſequel of theſe diſcourſes, as clearly and familiarly as I am able.

In the nature of the thing, nothing new or curious ought to have any place in ſuch an expoſition, as indeed ſuch matters ought to have little place in any public teaching of God's word: but leaſt of all, where only the plain fundamental truths of our common faith are to be taught, confirmed, and recommended in a plain way. And yet, as theſe truths are of all others the moſt neceſſary; the plaineſt things that can be ſaid about them, may deſerve the attention of all ſorts of perſons; eſpecially as it is but too poſſible, that ſome of all ſorts may never have been taught ſufficiently even the firſt principles of religion, and that many may by no means have ſufficiently retained, and conſidered ſince, what they learnt in their early years; but preſerving ſcarce more in their minds than the bare words, if ſo much, may be little the better, if at all, for the leſſons of their childhood. To which it might be added, that every one hath need, in a greater degree or a leſs, if not to be informed, yet to be reminded and excited.

Let me beg therefore, that all who have cauſe to hope they may receive benefit, would attend when they are able: and that all who have children or ſervants would bring or ſend them.

them. This is not a day of buſineſs. It ought not to be a day of idle amuſements. It is appointed for the public worſhip of God, and learning of his will. This is one of the hours of his worſhip: it is that part of the day in which you are moſt of you more at liberty, than you are in any other. And what will you ſay for yourſelves hereafter, if when you have the moſt intire leiſure, you chuſe rather to do any thing or nothing, than to ſerve your Maker, and improve in the knowledge of your duty? Never was there more danger of being infected with evil of every ſort from converſation in the world. Surely then you ſhould endeavour to fortify yourſelves, and thoſe who belong to you, with proper antidotes againſt it. And where will you find better than in the houſe of God? But particularly, I both charge and beg you, children, to mark diligently what I ſhall ſay to you: for all that you learn by rote will be of no uſe, unleſs you learn alſo to underſtand it. The expoſition, which you are taught along with your catechiſm, will help your underſtanding very much, if you mind it as you ought: and what you will hear from me may be a yet farther help. For, tho' there ſhould be ſome things in it above your capacities, yet I ſhall endeavour to the beſt of my power, that moſt things may be eaſy and plain to you. And, I entreat you, take care that they be not loſt upon you. You are ſoon going out into the world, where you will hear and ſee abundance of what is evil. For Chriſt's ſake lay in as much good, in the mean while, as you can, to guard againſt it.

But indeed it behoves us all, of whatever age or ſtation we be, to remember, that the belief and practice of true religion are what we are every one equally concerned in. For without them, the greateſt perſon upon earth will, in a very few years, be completely miſerable: and with them, the meaneſt will be eternally happy. *O hear ye this, all ye people; ponder it, all ye that dwell in the world; high and low, rich and poor, one with another**. *Apply your hearts to inſtruction, and your ears to the words of knowledge*†. *For whoſo findeth wiſdom, findeth life; and ſhall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that ſinneth againſt her, wrongeth his own ſoul; all they that hate her, love death*‡.

* Pſal. xlix. 1, 2. † Prov. xxiii. 12. ‡ Prov. viii. 35, 36.

LECTURE II.

Privileges of Baptiſm.

THE Catechiſm of our Church begins, with a prudent condeſcenſion and familiarity, by aſking the introductory queſtions, *What is your name?* and, *Who gave you this name?* which lead very naturally the perſon catechized to the mention of his baptiſm, at which time it was given him. Not that giving a name is any neceſſary part of baptiſm; but might have been done either before or afterwards, though it hath always been done then, as indeed it was likely that the firſt public opportunity would be taken for that purpoſe. But beſides, it was no uncommon thing in ancient times, that when a perſon entered into the ſervice of a new maſter, he had a new name beſtowed on him. Whence perhaps the Jews might derive the practice of naming the child, when it was circumciſed; it being then devoted to the ſervice of God. The firſt Chriſtians, in imitation of them would of courſe do the ſame thing, for the ſame reaſon, when it was baptized: and no wonder, that we continue the practice. For it might be a very uſeful one, if perſons would but remember, what it tends to remind them of, that they were dedicated to Chriſt, when their Chriſtian name was given them; and would make uſe of that circumſtance frequently to recollect thoſe promiſes, which were then ſolemnly made for them; and which they have ſince confirmed, or are to confirm and make perſonally for themſelves. Without performing theſe we are Chriſtians, not in deed, but in name only: and ſhall greatly diſhonour that name, while we bear it and boaſt of it.

Our baptiſmal name is given us, not by our parents, as we read in ſcripture the name of Jewiſh children was, but by our godfathers and godmothers. And this cuſtom alſo may have a double advantage. It may admoniſh them, that having conferred the title of Chriſtians upon us, they are bound to endeavour, that we may behave worthily of it. And it may admoniſh us, that our name having been given us by perſons, who were our ſureties, we are bound to make good their engagement.

But the office and uſe of godfathers will be conſidered under one of the following queſtions. The ſubject to be conſi-

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dered at preſent, though not fully, is baptiſm. For, this being our firſt entrance into the Chriſtian Church, by which we become intitled to certain privileges, and obliged to certain duties; religious inſtruction begins very properly by teaching young perſons, what both of them are. And in order to recommend the duties to us, the privileges are mentioned firſt.

Not but that God hath an abſolute right to our obſervance of his laws, without informing us beforehand, what benefit we ſhall reap from it. Surely it would be enough to know, that he is Lord and King of the whole earth; and that all his dealings with the works of his hands are juſt and reaſonable. Our buſineſs is to obey, and truſt him with the conſequences. But in great mercy, to encourage and attract his poor creatures, he hath been pleaſed to enter into a covenant, a gracious agreement with man: ſubjecting himſelf, as it were, to beſtow certain bleſſings on us, provided we perform certain conditions. But though, in this covenant, the promiſes, made on his part, flow from his own free goodneſs; yet the terms, required on ours, are matter of neceſſary obligation: and what was altogether voluntary in him, firmly binds us*.

Now the privileges thus conditionally ſecured to us in baptiſm, we find in our catechiſm very fitly reduced to theſe three heads: that the perſon who receives it, is *therein made a Member of Chriſt, a Child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.*

1. The firſt, and foundation of the others, is, that he is *made a member of Chriſt.* This figure of ſpeech all of you may not immediately underſtand: but when it is underſtood, you will perceive in it great ſtrength and beauty. It preſuppoſes, what we muſt be ſenſible of, more or leſs, that we are every one originally prone to ſin, and actually ſinners; liable thence to puniſhment; and without hope of preſerving ourſelves, by our own ſtrength, either from guilt or from miſery. It further implies, what the ſcripture clearly teaches, that Jeſus Chriſt hath delivered us from both, in ſuch manner as ſhall hereafter be explained to you, on the moſt equitable terms of our becoming his, by accepting him from the hand of God for our Saviour, our Teacher, and our Lord. This union to

 him,

* See Waterland's Review of the doctrine of the Euchariſt, c. xi. p. 425.

him, in order to receive theſe benefits from him, our Catechiſm, in conformity with the language of holy writ, compares with that of the members of the body to the head. And how proper the compariſon is, will eaſily appear by carrying it through the ſeveral particulars, in which the ſimilitude holds.

As, in every living creature, perception and motion proceed from the head; ſo, to every Chriſtian, knowledge of God's will, and power to obey it, flow from Chriſt. As the head governs and directs each limb, ſo Chriſt is the Sovereign and Law-giver of each believer. As being joined to the head makes the whole body one animal frame; ſo being joined to Chriſt makes the whole number of Chriſtians one ſpiritual ſociety. As communication with the head preſerves our natural life; ſo communion with Chriſt ſupports our religious life. He therefore is to the Church what the head is to the body: and each perſon who belongs to the Church, is a member of that body, or, in the language of the catechiſm, *a member of Chriſt*. For he, as St Paul expreſſes it, is *the Head: from which all the body, having nouriſhment miniſtered, and knit together by joints and bands, increaſeth with the increaſe of God**.

And this manner of ſpeaking is frequently repeated in ſcripture, as it well deſerves; being not only, as you have ſeen, admirably fitted to repreſent the happy relations, in which we ſtand to our Redeemer, but alſo to remind us of the duties, which are derived from them: of the honour and obedience due to him, who is *Head over all things to his body, the Church*†; of our continual dependence on him, *ſince he is our life*‡; and of the tenderneſs and kindneſs, which we owe to our fellow-Chriſtians, and they to us, being all united, through him, ſo intimately to each other. For ſince, as the apoſtle argues, *by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body*: as in the natural body, *the eye cannot ſay unto the hand, I have no need of thee*, nor any one member to the reſt, I have no need of you; but even the *more feeble and leſs honourable members are neceſſary*§: ſo in the ſpiritual body, they, who in any reſpect may ſeem to excel others, ought by no means to deſpiſe them; ſince every good Chriſtian is, in his proper degree and place, both a va-

* Col. ii 19. † Eph. i. 22, 23. ‡ Col. iii. 4.
§ 1 Cor. xii. 13, 21, 22, 23.

luable and an uſeful *member of Chriſt.* And again, as in the natural body, there is a connection and ſympathy of the ſeveral parts; by which the good ſtate of one preſerves the others in health and eaſe, or its bad ſtate gives them pain and diſorder; ſo ſhould there be in the ſpiritual body, and there is in all true members of it, a mutual caution not to do harm to each other, and a mutual deſire of each others benefit. *If one member ſuffer, all the other members* ſhould by a compaſſionate temper *ſuffer with it;* and *if one member be honoured, all* the reſt ſhould ſincerely *rejoice with it* *. Think then, do you feel in your hearts this good diſpoſition, as a mark of being members of Chriſt? If not, ſtudy to form yourſelves to it without delay.

2. The ſecond privilege of baptiſm is, that by it *we are made the children of God*, in a ſenſe and manner, in which by nature we are not ſo.

Our bleſſed Saviour indeed is called in ſcripture *the only-begotten Son of God.* Nor can the higheſt of creatures claim God for his Father by the ſame right that he doth. But in a lower ſenſe, God is the Father of angels and men; whom he hath created in their ſeveral degrees of likeneſs to his own image. Adam, our firſt parent, was the ſon of God by a ſtrong reſemblance to his heavenly Father in original uprightneſs. But as this ſimilitude was greatly obſcured both in him and in his deſcendants by the fall, though preſerved by the covenant of the promiſed Seed from being utterly effaced; ſo in time it was almoſt entirely loſt among men, by the prevalence of ſin; and they became in general *enemies of God* †, and *children of the devil* ‡.

But our gracious Maker, pitying us notwithſtanding, and treating us like children, even when thus degenerated, hath mercifully appointed a method for adopting us into his family again, after we have caſt ourſelves out of it; and for reſtoring and raiſing us gradually to the ſame and greater likeneſs to him and favour with him, than even our firſt parents ever enjoyed. Now this ineſtimable bleſſing was procured for mankind through the means of Jeſus Chriſt; and we become intitled to it by taking him for our head, and becoming his members, in ſuch manner, as you have heard briefly explained.

* 1 Cor. xii. 26. † Rom. v. 10. Col. i. 21. ‡ 1 John iii. 10.

ed. For *to as many as receives him, to them gives he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name* *. Being therefore thus united to him, who is in the higheſt ſenſe the Son of God; and claiming not in our own name, but under him; we are admitted again into ſuch a degree of ſonſhip as we are capable of; and made *the children of God, by faith in Jeſus Chriſt* †.

Indeed not only Chriſtians, but the Jews, are called in ſcripture *the children of God* ‡; and ſuch they really were; being firſt, as Chriſtians were afterwards, the *children of his covenant* §. But ſtill, as theirs was a ſtate of leſs knowledge, more burthenſome precepts, and ſtricter government; the apoſtle ſpeaks of them, compared with us, only as ſervants in his family. *Now I ſay, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a ſervant, though he be Lord of all. Even ſo we,* ſpeaking of the Jewiſh nation, *when we were children,* unqualified for any great degrees of liberty, *were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fulneſs of time was come, God ſent forth his Son to redeem them that were under the law. Wherefore we are no more ſervants but ſons* ||. *Behold,* then, as St John expreſſes it, *what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called,* in this diſtinguiſhed ſenſe, *the ſons of God* ¶: eſpecially conſidering the conſequence drawn by St Paul, *If children, then heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt* *; which is the

Third and laſt privilege of baptiſm, and completes the value of it, that by entering into the Chriſtian covenant we are *made inheritors of the kingdom of heaven;* that is, intitled to perfect and endleſs happineſs in body and ſoul. Had we continued in the primitive uprightneſs of our firſt parents, and never ſinned at all, we could have had no claim, but from God's free promiſe, to any thing more, than that our being ſhould not be worſe to us than not being. But as we are originally depraved, and have actually ſinned, far from having any claim to happineſs, we are liable to juſt puniſhment for ever. And leaſt of all could we have any claim to ſuch happineſs, as eternal life and glory. But *bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: who of his abundant mercy hath begotten us a-*

* John i. 12. † Gal. iii. 26. ‡ Deut. xiv. 1. § Acts iii. 25.
|| Gal. iv. 1, 3, 4, 7. ¶ 1 John iii. 1. * Rom. viii. 17.

*gain unto a lively hope; to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us**.

These then are the privileges of the Christian covenant. As for those, who have no knowledge of that covenant; the Apostle hath told us indeed, that *as many as have sinned without law; shall perish without law*†: but he hath told us also, that *when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, they are a law unto themselves* ‡. And whether none of them shall attain to any degree of a better life, is no concern of ours; who may well be contented with the assurance, that our own lot will be a happy one beyond all comparison, if we please. He, who hath shown the abundance of his love to us, will undoubtedly show, not only his justice, but his mercy, to all the works of his hands, as far, and in such manner as is fit. There is indeed *none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved*, but that of *Jesus Christ* §. But whether they, who have not had in this life the means of calling upon it, shall receive any benefit from him; or if any, what and how; as neither scriptnre hath told us, nor reason can tell us, it is presumptuous to determine, and useless to inquire.

The points to which we must attend, are those which relate to ourselves: that we *give* due *thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light* ‖; and be duly careful to *walk worthy of God, who hath called us into his kingdom and glory* ¶. For we have a right to the privileges of the covenant, only on the supposition and presumption of our performing the obligations of it. Children indeed of believers, who are taken out of the world before they become capable of faith and obedience, we doubt not, are happy. For the general declarations of holy writ plainly comprehend their case: and our Saviour hath particularly declared, that *of such is the kingdom of God* *. But all who live to maturer years; as, on the one hand, they may intitle themselves, through God's bountiful promise, though not their own merit, to higher degrees of future felicity, in proportion as their service hath been considerable; so on the other, they are intitled to no degree at all, any longer than they practise that holiness,

* 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. † Rom. ii. 12. ‡ Ibid. viii. 14. § Acts iv. 10, 12.
‖ Col. i. 12. ¶ 1 Thess. ii. 12. * Mark x. 14. Luke xviii. 16.

holineſs, in which they have engaged to live, and *without* which *no man ſhall ſee the Lord* *. We ſhall be acknowledged as children, only whilſt we obey our heavenly Father: and *the baptiſm which ſaveth us, is not the* outward *putting away of the filth of the fleſh, but the* inward *anſwer of a good conſcience towards God* †. Which therefore that we may all of us be able always to make, may he of his infinite mercy grant, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

LECTURE III.

Renunciation in Baptiſm.

AFTER the privileges, to which Baptiſm gives us a claim, our catechiſm proceeds to ſet forth the duties, to which it binds us: thoſe things, *which our godfathers and godmothers promiſed and vowed in our names.* For without the performance of theſe conditions, neither hath God engaged, nor is it conſiſtent with the holineſs of his nature and the honour of his government, to beſtow ſuch benefits upon us: nor indeed ſhall we be capable of receiving them. For a virtuous and religious temper and behaviour here, is abſolutely requiſite, not only to intitle, but to qualify and prepare us for a virtuous and religious bleſſedneſs hereafter, ſuch as that of heaven is.

Now theſe conditions, or obligations on our part, are three: that we renounce what God forbids; that we believe what he teaches, and do what he commands: or, in other words, repentance, faith, and obedience. Theſe things are plainly neceſſary; and they are plainly all that is neceſſary: for as, through the grace of God, we have them in our power; ſo we have nothing more. And therefore they have been conſtantly,

* Heb. xii. 14. † 1 Pet. iii. 21.

ſtantly, and without any material variation, expreſſed in baptiſm from the earlieſt ages of the church to the preſent.

The firſt thing, and the only one which can be explained at this time, is, that we renounce what God forbids, every ſin of every kind. And this is put firſt, becauſe it opens the way for the other two. When once we come to have a due ſenſe that we are ſinners, as all men are, and perceive the baſeneſs, the guilt, the miſchief of ſin, we ſhall fly from it, with ſincere penitence, to the remedy of faith which God hath appointed. And when we in earneſt reſolve to forſake whatever is wrong, we ſhall gladly embrace all ſuch truths as will direct us right, and do what they require. But whilſt we retain a love to any wickedneſs; it will make us, with reſpect to the doctrines of religion, backward to receive them *, or unwilling to think of them, or deſirous to interpret them unfairly: and with reſpect to the duties of religion, it will make our conduct unequal and inconſiſtent; perplexing us with ſilly attempts to reconcile vice and virtue, and to atone perhaps by zeal in little duties for indulgence of great faults; till at laſt we ſhall either fall into an open courſe of tranſgreſſion, or, which is equally fatal, contrive to make ourſelves eaſy in a ſecret one. The only effectual method therefore is to form a general reſolution at once, though we ſhall execute it but imperfectly and by degrees, of following in every thing the ſcripture rule, *Ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well* †.

Now the evil from which we are required to ceaſe, is alſo ranged in our catechiſm under three heads. For whatever we do amiſs, proceeds either from the ſecret ſuggeſtions of an inviſible enemy, from the temptations thrown in our way by the viſible objects around us, or from the bad diſpoſitions of our own nature: that is, from the devil, the world, or the fleſh. And though every one of theſe, in their turns, may incline us to every kind of ſin; and it is not always either eaſy or material to know, from which the inclination proceeded originally: yet ſome ſins may more uſually flow from one ſource, and ſome from another; and it will give us a more comprehenſive, and, ſo far at leaſt, a more uſeful view of them, if we conſider them each diſtinctly.

2 1. Firſt

* Hence our Saviour, ſpeaking of John Baptiſt, tells the Jews, Ye—repented not,—that ye might believe him, Mat. xxi. 32. † Iſ. i. 16, 17.

1. First then, we renounce in baptiſm *the devil and all his works*. This, in the primitive ages, was the only renunciation made: the works of the devil being underſtood to ſignify, as they do in ſcripture, every ſort of wickedneſs; which being often ſuggeſted by him, always acceptable to him, and an imitation of him, was juſtly conſidered as ſo much ſervice done him, and obedience paid him. But the method now taken, of renouncing the devil, the world, and the fleſh ſeparately, is more convenient, as it gives us a more particular account of our ſeveral enemies.

What we are taught concerning the devil, and demons or wicked ſpirits, in the word of God, is, that a number of angels, having ſinned againſt their Maker, (from what motives, or in what inſtances, we are not, as we need not be, clearly told, but) ſo as to be utterly unfit for pardon, were caſt out from heaven, and are kept under ſuch confinement as God ſees proper, till the day comes, when the final ſentence, which they have deſerved, ſhall be executed upon them: but that, in the mean time, being full of all evil, and void of all hope, they maliciouſly endeavour to make thoſe, whom they can, wicked and miſerable, like themſelves. And being all united under one head, and actuated by one and the ſame ſpirit of ill-will againſt us, we are concerned to look upon them as one enemy; and therefore the catechiſm ſpeaks of them as ſuch.

What means they uſe to tempt us, we are not diſtinctly informed: and it is great folly, either, on the one hand, to doubt of the reality of the fact, becauſe we know not the manner; or, on the other, to entertain groundleſs imaginations, or believe idle ſtories; and aſcribe more to evil ſpirits, than we have any ſufficient cauſe. For there is no religion in favouring ſuch fancies, or giving credit to ſuch tales; and there hath frequently ariſen a great deal of hurtful ſuperſtition from them. This we are ſure of, and it is enough, that neither Satan nor all his angels have power, either to force any one of us into ſin, or to hinder us from repenting, or, without God's eſpecial leave, to do any one of us the leaſt hurt in any other way. And we have no cauſe to think, that leave to do hurt is ever granted them, but on ſuch extraordinary occaſions as are mentioned in ſcripture. They are indeed often permitted to intice us to ſin, as we too often intice one another. But

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theſe inticements of evil ſpirits may be withſtood by us juſt as effectually, and nearly by juſt the ſame methods, as thoſe of evil men. *Reſiſt the devil, and he will flee from you: draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you* *. Unqueſtionably our danger is the greater, as we have not only fleſh and blood, our own bad inclinations, and the allurements of other bad perſons to encounter, but the efforts of an inviſible enemy likewiſe. And therefore it was great mercy in God, to grant us the knowledge of this intereſting, and otherwiſe undiſcoverable, circumſtance of our condition, that we may increaſe our watchfulneſs in proportion. And if we do, "greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world †:" and he "will not ſuffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear ‡."

But, though the devil hath no power of his own over us, we may give him as much as we will; and become ſlaves and vaſſals to him as long as we pleaſe. In this ſenſe his empire is very large: and on account of it the ſcripture calls him "the Prince of the Power of darkneſs §," and even "the god of this world ‖." For he was, and is ſtill, in great propriety of ſpeech, the god of many Heathen nations; who, inſtead of the righteous and good Maker of heaven and earth, worſhip deities of ſuch vile and miſchievous characters, as we juſtly aſcribe to the evil one. And even where faith in the true deity is profeſſed; yet pretended arts of magic, witchcraft, conjuring, fortune-telling, and ſuch like wicked follies, approach more or leſs to the ſame crime. For if any of the wretches, guilty of theſe things, either have, or imagine they have, any communication with the devil; they plainly rebel againſt God, and endeavour at leaſt to confederate with his enemy. Or if they only pretend a communication with him; as indeed uſually, if not always, it is mere pretence; yet this is very inconſiſtent with renouncing him. And even when they do not ſo much as pretend it, and would make us believe, that they have ſuch extraordinary ſkill and power derived from more innocent ſources; though they profeſs no reſpect to his perſon, they imitate him in one of his worſt qualities, as he is the father of lies. And the lies of this kind are very pernicious ones. They corrupt the notions of religion; give perſons

* Jam. iv. 7, 8. † 1 John iv. 4. ‡ 1 Cor. x. 13.
§ Eph. ii. 2. Col i. 13. ‖ 2 Cor. iv. 4.

ſons, unworthy opinions of God; and lead them to imagine, that other beings, as the ſtars, or even mere names, as chance and fate, ſhare with him in the government of the world. But indeed lies of all ſorts are particularly the works of him, who was a *liar*, as well as a *murderer from the beginning* *. And other ſins mentioned in ſcripture, as more eſpecially diabolical, are, pride, envy, malice, falſe accuſations. Whoſoever therefore allows himſelf in any of theſe things, "is of his father the devil, and the luſts of his father he doth †." But whoever is by baptiſm "delivered from the power of darkneſs, and tranſlated into the kingdom of God's dear Son ‡," renounces them all.

Aſk yourſelves then: Do you renounce them all in fact? For mere words are nothing. Do you carefully avoid them, and labour to preſerve yourſelves free from them; or do you live in any of them, and love them? That is, are you children of God, or of Satan; and whoſe are you willing to remain? Make us thine, good Lord, and keep us ſo for ever!

2. We renounce, in baptiſm, "all the pomps and vanities of this wicked world." The world, which God created, was good; and ſo far as it continues good, we renounce it not. Therefore the innocent gratifications, which he hath provided for us in it, we ought not to condemn, but to partake of them with moderation and thankfulneſs: the difference of ranks and ſtations, which is requiſite for the due order of ſociety, we ought to maintain with prudent humility: and every one ſhould take his proper part, as Providence directs him, in the various employments which furniſh to us the neceſſaries or conveniences of life. Labouring to procure ſuch a competency for ourſelves and ours, as will ſupport us comfortably in our preſent condition, is what we are bound to. And if, by lawful methods, and reaſonable care, we can riſe higher, we may allowably do it, and juſtly conſider it as the promiſed bleſſing of God upon our induſtry. In theſe reſpects then, we do not renounce the world: for in theſe it is not wicked. And we ſhould not affect to detach ourſelves too much from the ſtate of things, in which heaven hath placed us: but, ordinarily ſpeaking, take our ſhare, (whatever it happens to be,) and that contentedly, of ſuch employments as contribute to the

* John viii. 44. † Ibid. ‡ Col. i. 13.

common good. If we do meet with difficult trials in our way, as they are of God's chuſing for us, we are not to fly from them improperly, but truſt in him for ability to go through them well. And they, who reſolve to retire out of the reach of all ſuch temptations, ſeldom fail to run into more dangerous ones of their own creating.

We ought not therefore to ſhun what our Maker hath appointed us to engage in: but then we ought to engage in it only in ſuch manner as he hath appointed; and to recollect continually, *that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedneſs* *. Not only the heathen world had its idolatrous pomps, or public ſpectacles, and its immoral vanities, which were peculiarly meant in this renunciation at firſt: but that, which calls itſelf Chriſtian, is full of things, from which a true Chriſtian muſt abſtain. All methods of being powerful or popular, inconſiſtent with our integrity; all arts of being agreeable at the expence or hazard of our innocence, all ways of encroaching on the properties of others, and all immoderate deſires of adding to our own; all diverſions, entertainments and acquaintances, that have a tendency to hurt our morals or our piety: making common practice the rule of our conduct, without conſidering whether it be right or wrong; filling our time in ſuch manner, either with buſineſs or amuſements, (be they ever ſo innocent in themſelves) as not to leave room for the main buſineſs of life, the improvement of our hearts in virtue, the ſerious exerciſe of religion, and a principal attention to the great concerns of eternity: theſe are the things, in which conſiſts that *friendſhip with the world* which *is enmity with God* *; and *if any man love it* thus, *the love of the Father is not in him* †. Which then do you renounce, and which do you chuſe? The world, or the Maker of it? Surely you will adopt the Pſalmiſt's words: *I cried unto thee, O Lord, and ſaid, Thou art my hope, and my portion, in the land of the living* ‡.

3. We renounce, at our baptiſm, *all the ſinful luſts of the fleſh*: that is, every unreaſonable and forbidden gratification of any appetite or averſion that belongs to the human frame. Whatever inclination is truly primitive in our nature may be innocently gratified, provided it be in a lawful manner, and a due

* Jam. iv. 4. † 1 John ii. 15. ‡ Pſal. cxlii. 6.

due ſubordination to the higher principles within us: but when theſe bounds are tranſgreſſed there begins ſin. All ſuch indulgence therefore in eating or drinking, as obſcures the reaſon of perſons, inflames their paſſions, hurts their health, impairs their fortunes, or waſtes their time; all ſloth, indolence, and luxurious delicacy; all wantonneſs, impurity, and indecency, with whatever tempts to it; theſe are renounced under this head: and not theſe only; but every other ſin, that hath its firſt riſe within our hearts. For, in the language of religion, as the *ſpirit* ſignifies the inward principle of all good, ſo doth the *fleſh* that of all evil. Therefore vanity and ſelf-conceit, immoderate anger, ill temper and hard-heartedneſs, repining at the good of others, or even at our own diſadvantages; in ſhort, whatever diſpoſition of our ſouls is diſhonourable to God, prejudicial to our neighbour, or unreaſonable in itſelf, falls under the ſame denomination with the aforementioned vices. For *the works of the fleſh*, ſaith the apoſtle, *are manifeſt: adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, hatred, variance, wrath, ſtrife, ſeditions, envyings, and ſuch like: of the which I tell you before, as I alſo told you in time paſt, that they who do ſuch things, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God**. *Let us therefore fear, leſt a promiſe being left us of entering into his reſt, any of you ſhould come ſhort of it*†. And let us diligently and frequently examine our hearts, whether we uſe every proper method to *cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God*‡.

But before I conclude, I muſt deſire you to obſerve, concerning each of the things, which we renounce in baptiſm, that we do not undertake what is beyond our power; that the temptations of the devil ſhall never beſet and moleſt us; that the vain ſhew of the world ſhall never appear inviting to us; that our own corrupt nature ſhall never prompt or incline us to evil: but we undertake, what, through the grace of God, though not without it, is in our power; that we will not, either deſignedly or careleſsly, give theſe our ſpiritual enemies needleſs advantages againſt us; and that, with whatever advantage they may at any time attack us, we will never yield to them, but always reſiſt them with our utmoſt prudence and

 ſtrength.

* Gal. xv. 19,—21. † Heb. iv. 1. ‡ 2 Cor. vii. 1.

ſtrength. This is the renunciation here meant: and the office of baptiſm expreſſeth it more fully; where we engage *ſo to renounce the devil, the world and the fleſh, that we will not follow nor be led by them.* Now God grant us all, faithfully to make this engagement good, *that after we have done his will, we may receive his promiſe* *!

LECTURE IV.

Obligation to believe and to do, &c.

OUR Catechiſm, in the anſwer to its third queſtion, teaches, that three things are promiſed in our name, when we are baptized: that we ſhall renounce what God forbids, believe what he makes known, and do what he commands. The firſt of theſe hath been explained to you. The ſecond and third ſhall be explained, God willing, hereafter. But before the catechiſm proceeds to them, it puts a fourth queſtion, and a very natural one, conſidering that children do not, as they cannot, promiſe theſe things for themſelves, but their godfathers and godmothers in their names. It aſks them therefore, *whether they think they are bound to believe and to do, as they have promiſed for them.* And to this the perſon inſtructed anſwers, *Yes verily:* the fitneſs of which anſwer will appear by enquiring.

1. In what ſenſe, and for what reaſon, they promiſed theſe things in our names.

2. On what account we are bound to make their promiſes good.

1. In what ſenſe, and for what reaſon, they promiſed theſe things in our names. A little attention will ſhew you this matter clearly.

The

* Heb. x. 36.

The perſons who began the profeſſion of Chriſtianity in the world, muſt have been ſuch, as were of age to make it their own free choice. And when they entered into the covenant of baptiſm, they undoubtedly both had the privileges of it declared to them, and engaged to perform the obligations of it, in ſome manner, equivalent to that, which we now uſe. When theſe were admitted, by baptiſm, into the Chriſtian church, their children had a right to be ſo too, as will be proved in the ſequel of theſe lectures: at preſent let it be ſuppoſed. But if baptiſm had been adminiſtered to children, without any thing ſaid to expreſs its meaning, it would have had too much the appearance of an inſignificant ceremony, or a ſuperſtitious charm. And if only the privileges, to which it intitled, had been rehearſed; they might ſeem annexed to it abſolutely, without any conditions to be obſerved on the childrens part. It was therefore needful to expreſs the conditions alſo. Now it would naturally appear the ſtrongeſt and livelieſt way of expreſſing them, to repreſent the infant, as promiſing by others then, what he was to promiſe by and for himſelf, as ſoon as he could. So the form, uſed already for perſons grown up, was applied, with a few changes, to children alſo. And though, by ſuch application, ſome words and phraſes muſt appear a little ſtrange, if they were ſtrictly interpreted: yet the intention of them was and is underſtood to be a very proper one; declaring in the fulleſt manner what the child is to do hereafter, by a figure and repreſentation made of it at preſent.

But then, as baptiſm is adminiſtered only on the preſumption, that this repreſentation is to become in due time a reality: ſo the perſons, who thus promiſe in the child's name, are and always have been looked on as promiſing, by the ſame words, in their own name, not indeed abſolutely, that the child ſhall fulfil their engagements, which no body can promiſe; but that, ſo far as need requires, they will endeavour that he ſhall: on which it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed, that he will. Anciently the parents were the perſons, who, at baptiſm, both repreſented their children, and promiſed for their inſtruction and admonition. But it was conſidered afterwards, that they were obliged to it without promiſing it: and therefore other perſons were procured to undertake it alſo: not to excuſe the parents from that care, from which nothing can excuſe them;

but

but only, in a caſe of ſuch conſequence, to provide an additional ſecurity for it. If then the parents give due inſtruction, and the child follows it, the godfathers have nothing to do, but to be heartily glad. But if on either ſide there be a failure, it is then *their part and duty* to interpoſe, as far as they have ability and opportunity with any proſpect of ſucceſs. Nor is this to be done only till young perſons take their baptiſmal vow upon themſelves at confirmation, but ever after. For to that end, even they, who are baptiſed in their riper years, muſt have godfathers and godmothers preſent: not to repreſent them, or to promiſe for them, neither being wanted; but to remind them, if there be occaſion, *what a ſolemn profeſſion they have made before theſe their choſen witneſſes* *.

This then is the nature, and theſe are the reaſons of that promiſe, which the ſureties of children baptized make in their name: which promiſe therefore may without queſtion be ſafely and uſually made, provided it be afterwards religiouſly kept. But they, who probably will be wanted to perform their promiſe, and yet will neglect it, ſhould not be invited to enter into it: and if they are, ſhould refuſe. Let every one concerned think ſeriouſly, whether he hath obſerved theſe rules, or not: for evidently it is a ſerious matter, how little ſoever it be commonly conſidered as ſuch.

2. The ſecond queſtion is, On what account we are bound by what was promiſed at our baptiſm, ſince we neither conſented to that engagement, nor knew of it. Now certainly we are not bound to do whatever any other perſon ſhall take upon him to promiſe in our name. But if the thing promiſed be part of an agreement advantageous to us, we are plainly bound in point of intereſt; and indeed of conſcience too: for we ought to conſult our own happineſs. Even by the laws of men, perſons, unable to expreſs their conſent, are yet preſumed to conſent to what is for their own good †: and obligations are underſtood to lie upon them from ſuch preſumed conſent ever after: eſpecially if there be a repreſentative acting

* Office of Baptiſm.

† The firſt foundation of obligations *quaſi ex contracta* is, that *Quiſque præſumitur conſentire in id, quod Utilitatem affert.* See Eden, El. Jur Civ. l. 3. tit. 28. p. 206.

ing for them, who is empowered ſo to do*. And parents are empowered by Nature to act for their children; and by ſcripture to do it in this very caſe; and therefore may employ others to do it under them. But further ſtill: the things, promiſed in baptiſm, would have been abſolutely incumbent on us, whether they had been promiſed or not. For it is incumbent on all perſons to believe and do what God commands. Only the tie is made ſtronger by the care then taken, that we ſhall be taught our duty. And when we have acknowledged ourſelves to have learnt it, and have ſolemnly engaged ourſelves to perform it, as we do when we are confirmed, then the obligation is complete.

But perhaps it will be aſked, How ſhall all perſons, eſpecially the poor and unlearned, know, that what they are taught to believe is really true; and what they are taught to do, really their duty. I anſwer: The greateſt part of it, when once it is duly propoſed to them, they may perceive to be ſo, by the light of their own reaſon and conſcience: as I doubt not to ſhow you. Such points indeed as depend not on reaſon, but on the revelation made in ſcripture, cannot all of them be proved in ſo ſhort a way, nor perhaps to an equal degree of plainneſs: but to a ſufficient degree they may; as I hope to ſhew you alſo. And in ſuch matters, they, who have but ſmall abilities or opportunities for knowledge, muſt, where they cannot do better for themſelves, rely on thoſe who have more: not blindly and abſolutely, but ſo far as is prudent and fit: juſt as, in common buſineſs, and the very weightieſt of our worldly concerns, we all truſt, on many occaſions, to one anothers judgment and integrity: nor could the affairs of human life go on, if we did not. And though in this method of proceeding, ſome will have far leſs light than others; yet all will have enough to direct their ſteps: and they who have the leaſt, are as much obliged to follow that carefully, as if they had the moſt; and will be as ſurely led by it to a happy end. Hearken therefore to inſtruction diligently, and conſider of it ſeriouſly, and judge of it uprightly: and fear not at all after this, but that when you are aſked, whether *you think yourſelves bound to believe and to do what was promiſed in your name*, you

* Of Stipulations in another's name, ſee Inſt. 3. 20. 20.

you will be well able, and on good grounds, to anſwer in the firſt place, *Yes verily.*

But your anſwer muſt not ſtop here. When you are thus perſuaded, your next concern is, immediately to act according to that perſuaſion. Now as this depends on two things; our own reſolution, and aſſiſtance from above: ſo both are expreſſed in the following words of the anſwer, *and by God's help, ſo I will.* Further, Becauſe our own reſolution is beſt ſupported by our ſenſe of the advantage of keeping it; therefore the perſon inſtructed goes on, in the ſame anſwer, to acknowledge, that the ſtate, in which he is placed by baptiſm, is *a ſtate of ſalvation*: and becauſe aſſiſtance from above is beſt obtained by thankfulneſs for God's mercy hitherto, and prayer for it hereafter, he concludes, by *thanking our heavenly Father, for calling him to this ſtate; and praying for his grace, that he may continue in the ſame to his life's end.*

Now the neceſſity and nature of God's grace, and of prayer and other means to obtain it, will be explained in their proper places. The two points therefore of which it remains to ſpeak at preſent, are, the need of good reſolution, and of thankfulneſs for that happy ſtate, in which baptiſm hath placed us.

In every thing that we attempt, much depends on a deliberate and fixed purpoſe of mind. But particularly in religion, when once we are thoroughly convinced, that whatever it requires muſt be done; and have determined accordingly, that, though we know there will be labour and difficulty in going on, and many ſolicitations and enticements to leave off, yet we will ſet about the work, and perſevere in it; obſtacles and diſcouragements, that till then appeared very threatening, will, a great part of them, vaniſh into nothing; and thoſe, which remain, will ſerve only to exerciſe our courage, and make our triumph glorious; provided we keep our reſolution alive and in vigour, by frequently repeating it in a proper manner: that is, in a ſtrong ſenſe of God's preſence, and an humble dependence on his bleſſing. For if we truſt in ourſelves, we ſhall fail. And if we pretend to truſt in God, without exerting ourſelves, we ſhall fail equally. In either caſe, the good impreſſions made on our minds will be continually growing fainter of courſe: and multitudes of things will con-

ſpire to wear them quite out. Pleaſures will ſoften us into diſſoluteneſs; or amuſements, into neglect of every ſerious attention. Love of riches, or power, or applauſe will engage us in wrong methods of attaining them: or the cares of life will baniſh the duties of it from our thoughts. Vehement paſſions will overſet our virtue: or inſinuating temptations undermine it as effectually. Some of theſe things muſt happen, unleſs we preſerve a ſteady and watchful, a modeſt and religious reſolution againſt them, ever freſh on our minds.

And nothing will contribute more to our doing this, than reflecting often, with due thankfulneſs, that the ſtate, *to which God hath called us*, is *a ſtate of ſalvation*: a ſtate of deliverance from the preſent ſlavery of ſin, and the future puniſhment of it; a ſtate of the trueſt happineſs, that this life can afford, introducing us to perfect and everlaſting happineſs in the next. Such is the condition, in which, through the mercy of God, we Chriſtians are placed; and in which, by a Chriſtian behaviour, we may ſecure ourſelves; and not only preſerve, but continually enlarge our ſhare of its bleſſings. But if we now neglect to do for ourſelves what we ought; all, that hath been done for us by others, will be of no avail. Neither our baptiſm, nor our inſtruction; nor our learning ever ſo exactly, or underſtanding ever ſo diſtinctly, or remembering ever ſo particularly, what we were inſtructed in, can poſſibly have any effect, but to increaſe our condemnation, unleſs we faithfully *continue in* the practice of every part of it *to our life's end*. This therefore let us all determine to make our conſtant and moſt earneſt care, with humble gratitude to God, *our heavenly Father*, for his undeſerved mercy to us; and with ſure confidence, that if we be not wanting to ourſelves, *he that hath begun a good work in us, will perform it, until the day of Jeſus Chriſt* *.

* Philip. i. 6.

LECTURE V.

Grounds and rule of Faith.

HAVING already explained to you the ſeveral things, which Chriſtians by the Covenant of their Baptiſm renounce; I come now to ſpeak of what we are to believe: after which will follow properly what we are to do. For all reaſonable practice muſt be built on ſome belief or perſuaſion, which is the ground of it: virtuous practice, on a perſuaſion, that what we do is fit and right; religious practice, on a perſuaſion, that it is the will of God. Now God hath been pleaſed to make his will known by two ways: partly by the mere inward light of our own underſtandings; partly by the outward means of additional declarations from himſelf. The former of theſe we call natural religion: the latter, revealed religion.

The natural reaſon of our own minds, if we would ſeriouſly attend to it, and faithfully aſſiſt each other in uſing it, is capable of diſcovering, as ſhall be proved to you, not only the Being and Attributes, and authority of God; but, in general, what ſort of behaviour he muſt expect from ſuch creatures, placed in ſuch a world, as we are, in order to avoid his diſpleaſure, and procure ſome degree of his favour. And as we cannot doubt of what our own clear apprehenſion, and the common ſenſe of mankind, plainly tell us: here is one foundation of religious belief and practice, evident to all men. And if our belief and practice be not ſuitable to it, our conſciences, whenever we conſult them, nay often whether we conſult them or not, will condemn us, to our faces, of ſin; and proclaim to us beforehand the juſtice of that future condemnation, which God will paſs upon it. Every one of you, that hear me, have at times felt this; make every one of you, a proper uſe of it.

If then the light of nature were our only guide, it would teach us more than, I fear, many of us obſerve. But happy are we, that this is not our only guide. For it would leave us uninformed in many particulars of unſpeakable moment,

even

even were our faculties unimpaired, and employed to the beſt advantage. But alas, the very firſt of mankind fell into ſin, and derived a corrupt nature down to their poſterity: who yet further inflamed their own paſſions and appetites, perverted their own judgments, turned aſide their attention from the truth; and *the light that was in them became*, in a great meaſure, *darkneſs* *, even in reſpect of what they were to do. But what they were to hope and fear after doing wickedly, this was a matter of far greater obſcurity ſtill. And had we, here preſent, been left to ourſelves, in all likelihood we had been, at this hour, (like multitudes of other poor wretches in every part of the world that is unenlightened by Chriſtianity,) worſhipping ſtocks and ſtones: or however, we ſhould certainly, in other reſpects, have been *walking in the vanity of our minds, having the underſtanding darkened, alienated from the life of God* †; *ſtrangers from the covenant of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world* ‡.

But he was graciouſly pleaſed not to leave fallen men to themſelves, but to furniſh them with needful knowledge. What human abilities, what at the beſt, might have diſcovered, they would in all likelihood have diſcovered (if at all) ſo ſlowly, that we have great cauſe to believe, the religion of our firſt parents was derived from his immediate inſtruction. But certainly after their tranſgreſſion, he made an immediate revelation to them; and thenceforward vouchſafed from time to time various manifeſtations, to ſuch as would receive them, of his truths, his commands, and his purpoſes: not only republiſhing the original doctrines of reaſon, but adding new articles of belief, new promiſes, and new precepts, as the changing circumſtances of things required; till at length, by his Son, our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, he confirmed all his paſt notifications, and took away all neceſſity of future ones; acquainting us fully, in the ever-bleſſed goſpel, with all that we ſhall need to know, or be bound to do, *till heaven and earth paſs* §.

Thus then, beſides thoſe things in religion, which our own reaſon can diſcern, we receive others on the teſtimony of their being revealed by God: as unqueſtionably we ought. For if he, who cannot err, and cannot lie, communicates any

* Mat. vi. 23. † Eph. iv. 17, 18. ‡ Eph. ii. 12. § Mat. v. 18.

information to us; though it requires us to believe, what we had before not the leaſt apprehenſion of, or ſhould elſe have imagined to be exceedingly ſtrange and unlikely; though it require us to do, what otherwiſe we ſhould neither have thought of doing, nor have choſen to do; yet ſurely his teſtimony and command may well be ſufficient reaſon for both. We admit every day, upon the teſtimony one of another, things utterly unknown to us, and in themſelves extremely improbable: and we act upon ſuch teſtimony in matters, on which our fortunes, our healths, our lives depend: as indeed without doing ſo, the affairs of the world could not be carried on. Now, "if we receive the witneſs of men, the witneſs of God is greater *." And ſince we are able to convey the knowledge of our thoughts and wills to each other, no queſtion but God is able to convey his to his creatures.

But, allowing that he can, it may be aſked, How do we prove, that he hath conveyed it to men in the Jewiſh and Chriſtian revelations? I anſwer, we believe the Jewiſh revelation, for this plain reaſon, amongſt others, becauſe the Chriſtian confirms it: and we believe the Chriſtian, chiefly upon the full proof, which Chriſt and his Apoſtles have given of it. They who ſaw him, with their own eyes, perform things which man could not do; and heard him, with their own ears, foretel things, which man could not foreknow, and yet experienced them to come to paſs: as for inſtance, his healing great numbers of ſick perſons with a word, and raiſing himſelf from the dead: they muſt be ſure, that ſome power attended him more than human. And ſince his doctrines all promoted the ſpiritual worſhip and honour of the one true God, and virtue and happineſs among men: they muſt be ſure alſo, that this power was not that of an evil ſpirit, but of a good one: and conſequently, that he came from God, and taught his will. If then it be true, that he did, in their preſence, not only deliver ſuch doctrine, but foretel and perform ſuch things; then their faith was reaſonable, and ours is ſo too. Now they do in the ſtrongeſt manner affirm this: as you may read throughout the goſpels and acts: and why are they not to be credited? They could not every one of them be miſtaken in it all; and think they ſaw and heard, day after day, and

* 1 John v. 9.

and year after year, things which they did not, any more than we can be miſtaken in every thing that we ſee and hear continually. Beſides, they affirm, that they were enabled to do the ſame wonders themſelves, and enabled others to do them. All this could not be miſtake too.

And as they could not be deceived in theſe points, ſo neither could they intend to deceive mankind. There is all the appearance in the world of their being fair and honeſt perſons, that would not deceive for intereſt. But beſides, what they affirmed was abſolutely againſt their intereſt. It expoſed them, as they could not but imagine it would, to reproach, impriſonment, ſtripes, death itſelf. Yet all theſe things they underwent patiently, one after another, through a courſe of many years, for the ſake of what they taught; none of them all confeſſing, or being convicted of any falſehood: which yet they muſt have been, had they been guilty of any: for the things which they affirmed, were many, indeed moſt of them, done publicly: and all the power, and all the learning, of the world were employed againſt them, from the firſt, to detect them, if poſſible. Yet no body pretends, or ever did pretend, that they were detected. Beſides, if any ſuch diſcovery had been made, their whole ſcheme muſt have been ruined immediately: whereas, inſtead of that, they ſpread their religion (though it was contrary to the eſtabliſhed ſuperſtitions, the deep-rooted prejudices, and favourite vices, of all mankind) through the whole earth, within a few years, by mere force of miracles and arguments, and innocence, againſt all oppoſition. Theſe things ſurely are proofs ſufficient of our Saviour's coming from God, without ſaying any thing of the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, ſo many of which were ſo clearly fulfilled in him.

But then, as all the facts hitherto mentioned are ancient ones; it may be aſked farther, How can we now be ſure of the truth of what is ſaid to have been done ſo many ages ago? I anſwer, By all the ſame means, which can aſſure us of any other ancient fact. And there are multitudes of much ancienter, which no body hath the leaſt doubt of; and it would be reckoned madneſs, if they had. The miracles of Chriſt and his apoſtles are recorded in the New Teſtament: a book very fully proved, and indeed acknowledged, to be, the greateſt

eſt part of it, written by the apoſtles themſelves; and the reſt, in their days, by their direction: and no one material fact of it is, or ever was, ſo far as we can learn, oppoſed by any contrary evidence whatſoever. Then, that vaſt numbers of perſons were converted to this religion, as they declared, by ſeeing theſe miracles, and vaſt numbers more, by the accounts, which they received of them; and perſevered in their faith, againſt all worldly diſcouragements, till at length it became the prevailing one; appears partly from the New Teſtament alſo, partly from other books of acknowledged authority, written in that age and the following ones, by Heathens and Jews, as well as Chriſtians; and indeed is in the main univerſally owned and notorious.

But ſuppoſing the facts, on which our religion is built, to be truly related, yet it may be aſked further, How ſhall we be ſure, that its doctrines were ſo too, in which it is much eaſier to miſtake? I anſwer again, the doctrines of the Old Teſtament are atteſted and confirmed by the New. And for thoſe of the New Teſtament; we have our Saviour's own diſcourſes, recorded by two of his apoſtles, Matthew and John, who heard him conſtantly; and by two other perſons, Mark and Luke, who at leaſt received them from his conſtant hearers. We have alſo the diſcourſes of his firſt diſciples after his reſurrection, recorded in the Acts: we have beſides, many letters written by them, the epiſtles, ſent on ſeveral occaſions, for the inſtruction of ſeveral new planted churches. Now all theſe agree in the ſame doctrine. But further, which adds ineſtimable value to what they have ſaid and written, our Lord himſelf promiſed them, that the Spirit of God ſhould "teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatever he had ſaid unto them *;" "ſhould come and abide with them for ever, and guide them into all truth †." And accordingly this Spirit did come, and manifeſt his continual preſence with them by his miraculous gifts. We have therefore the fulleſt evidence, that both what they have delivered, as from our Saviour, and what they have ſaid in their own names, is a true repreſentation of his religion.

But another queſtion is, ſuppoſing the ſcripture a true revelation, ſo far as it goes; how ſhall we know, if it be a full and

* John xiv. 26. † John xiv. 16. xvi. 13.

and complete one too, in all things neceſſary? I anſwer, Since our Saviour had the Spirit without meaſure, and the writers of ſcripture had as large a meaſure of it, as their commiſſion to inſtruct the world required, it is impoſſible, that in ſo many diſcourſes concerning the terms of ſalvation, as the New Teſtament contains, they ſhould all have omitted any one thing neceſſary to the great end which they had in view. And what was not neceſſary when the ſcripture was completed, cannot have become ſo ſince. For *the faith* was *once* for all *delivered* in it *to the ſaints* *: and *other foundation can no man lay*†, than what was laid then. The ſacred penmen themſelves could teach no other goſpel than Chriſt appointed them: and he hath appointed no one ſince to make additions to it.

In the books of ſcripture then the doctrines of our religion are truly and fully conveyed to us: and we cannot be ſure of any other conveyance. It is a confirmation of our faith indeed, that the earlieſt Chriſtian writers, after thoſe of ſcripture, in all material points agree with it. But if they do not, no writers can have equal authority with inſpired ones. And no unwritten tradition can long be of any authority at all. For things, delivered by word of mouth, always vary, more or leſs, in going through but a few hands. And the world hath experienced, that articles of belief, for want of having recourſe to the written rule of them, have greatly changed in many churches of Chriſtians: but in few or none more, than that of Rome, which abſurdly pretends to be unchangeable and infallible. It is the ſcripture alone then, that we, who live in theſe later ages, can be ſure of finding the Chriſtian faith preſerved, complete and undefiled: and there we may be ſure of it.

For as to any pretence or fear of theſe books being corrupted and altered, either by deſign or miſtake: had the Old Teſtament been depraved in any thing eſſential, our Saviour and his Apoſtles would have given us notice of it. And for the New, the ſeveral parts of it were ſo immediately ſpread thro' the world, and ſo conſtantly read, in public and in private, by Chriſtians; and ſo perpetually quoted in all their diſcourſes, and all the diſputes of one ſect with another, that they could

* Jude 3. † 1 Cor. iii. 11.

could not poſſibly be changed, by any of them, in any thing conſiderable. For the reſt would immediately have diſcovered it, and charged them with it, which muſt put an end to the danger. And indeed it is an agreed point, amongſt all who underſtand theſe matters, that nothing of this kind either hath happened or can happen, ſo as to affect any one article of faith.

But perhaps it will be alledged, that the Bible was written originally in languages, which have long been out of common uſe, and with which but a ſmall part of Chriſtians now are acquainted: and how ſhall the reſt be ſure, that we have them rightly tranſlated into our own? The plain anſwer is, that all tranſlations, made by all parties, agree in moſt places, and thoſe of the moſt importance: and where they diſagree, moderate conſideration and inquiry will enable any perſons, who live in a country of knowledge and freedom, which, God be thanked, is our caſe, to judge on ſome good grounds, as far as they need judge, which is right, and which is wrong; which is clear, and which is doubtful. Nor doth any ſect of Chriſtians pretend to accuſe our common tranſlation of concealing any neceſſary truth, or aſſerting any deſtructive error.

But ſuppoſing all this, yet it may be urged, that many parts of ſcripture in our tranſlation, and in the original too, are dark and obſcure: and how can it then be the guide and rule of our faith? I anſwer, Theſe are few in proportion to ſuch as are clear: and were they more, the Spirit of God, we may be ſure, would make all neceſſary points, in one part or another, ſufficiently clear. Theſe therefore the moſt ignorant may learn from ſcripture: at leaſt by the help of ſuch explanations, as they are willing to aſk and truſt in all other caſes, and much admirable inſtruction beſides: which if they do but reſpect and obſerve as they ought; they may be content to leave for the uſe of others, what a little modeſty will ſhow them is above their own reach.

But that every perſon may be enabled the better to diſtinguiſh between the neceſſary doctrines and the reſt: thoſe which either Chriſt or his apoſtles expreſsly taught to be of the former ſort, or the nature of the thing plainly ſhows to be ſuch, have from the earlieſt times been collected together, and the profeſſion of them hath been particularly required of all perſons baptized. Theſe collections or ſummaries are in

ſcripture

ſcripture called, *The form of ſound words* *, *The words of faith* †, *The principles of the doctrine of Chriſt* ‡: but in the preſent language of Chriſtians, *The Creed*, that is, the belief.

The ancient Church had many ſuch Creeds: ſome longer, ſome ſhorter; differing in expreſſion, but agreeing in method and ſenſe: of which that called the Apoſtles Creed was one. And it deſerves that name, not ſo much from any certainty that the apoſtles drew it up, as becauſe it contains the apoſtolical doctrines; and was uſed by a church, which, before it corrupted itſelf, was juſtly conſidered as one of the chief apoſtolical foundations, I mean the Roman.

But neither this nor any other creed, hath authority of its own, equal to ſcripture; but derives its principal authority from being founded on ſcripture. Nor is it in the power of any man, or number of men, either to leſſen or increaſe the fundamental articles of the Chriſtian Faith: which yet the church of Rome, not content with this its primitive creed, hath profanely attempted: adding twelve articles more, founded on its own, that is, on no authority, to the ancient twelve, which ſtand on the authority of God's word. But our church hath wiſely refuſed to go a ſtep beyond the original form; ſince all neceſſary truths are briefly comprehended in it, as will appear when the ſeveral parts of it come to be expounded, which it is the duty of every one of us firmly to believe, and openly to profeſs. *For with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, and with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation* §.

* 2 Tim. i. 13. † 1 Tim. iv. 6. ‡ Heb. vi. 1.
§ Rom. x. 10.

LECTURE VI.

CREED.

Article I.—*I believe in God the Father*, &c.

THE foundation of all religion is faith in God: the perſuaſion, that there doth, ever did, and ever will exiſt, one Being of unbounded Power and Knowledge, perfect Juſtice, Truth and Goodneſs, the Creator and Preſerver, the Sovereign Lord and Ruler of all Things. With this article therefore our Creed begins. And as all the reſt are built upon it, ſo the truth and certainty of it is plain to every man, when duly propoſed to his conſideration, how unlikely ſoever ſome men would have been to diſcover it of themſelves.

We know beyond poſſibility of doubt, that we now are; and yet the oldeſt of us, but a few years ago, was not. How then came we to be? Whence had we our beginning? From our parents, perhaps we may think. But did our parents know, or do we know in the leaſt, how to form ſuch a mind as that of man, with all its faculties; or ſuch a body as that of man, with all its parts and members; or even the very ſmalleſt of them? No more than a tree knows how to make the ſeed that grows into a like tree: no more, than any common inſtrument knows how to do the work, which is done by its means. Our parents were only inſtruments in the hands of ſome higher power: and, to ſpeak properly, That *it is which made us, and not we ourſelves* *, or one another. And the ſame is the caſe of every animal and every plant upon the face of the earth.

But could our parents be the cauſe of our being; yet ſtill the firſt human pair muſt have had ſome different cauſe of theirs. Will it then be ſaid, that there was no firſt? But we cannot conceive this to be poſſible. And it certainly is not true. For we have undoubted accounts in ancient hiſtories, of the time when men were but few in the world, and inhabited but a ſmall

* Pſalm c. 2.

a ſmall part of it; and therefore were near their beginning: accounts of the times, when almoſt all arts and ſciences were invented, which mankind would not have been long in being, much leſs from eternity, without finding out. And upon the whole, there is ſtrong evidence, that the preſent frame of things is not more than about ſix thouſand years old: and that none of us, here preſent, is 150 generations diſtant from our firſt parent.

If it be ſaid, that univerſal deluges may perhaps have deſtroyed almoſt all the race of men, and ſo made that ſeem a new beginning, which was not: we anſwer, that one ſuch deluge we own; but that no ſuch can poſſibly happen according to the common courſe of nature, as learned perſons have abundantly ſhown. And conſequently, this proves a higher power, inſtead of deſtroying the proof of it.

But without having recourſe to hiſtory, it is evident from the very form and appearance of this earth, that it cannot have been from eternity. If it had, to mention nothing elſe, the hills muſt all have been waſhed down by ſhowers, innumerable ages ago, to a level with the plains*. And indeed they, who have thought of theſe matters, well know and confeſs, that the preſent conſtitution of the heavens and earth both muſt have a beginning, and muſt of itſelf come to an end.

To ſay therefore, that things are by nature what they are, is to ſay a plain falſehood, if we mean, that they are ſo by any neceſſity in their own natures. For then they muſt always have been ſuch as we ſee them; and not the leaſt part of any thing could poſſibly have been at all different from what it is: which is the wildeſt imagination in the world. The only nature therefore, which we and the whole univerſe have, was freely given us by a ſuperior Being. And the regularity, in which things go on, is no more a proof, that they were of themſelves from everlaſting, or ſhall continue as they are to everlaſting, than the regular motion of a clock is a proof,

* This argument is produced from *Theophraſtus*, in Philo περὶ ἀφθαρσίας κόσμου, page 510; and two anſwers to it attempted, p. 513: That mountains may loſe parts, and gain them again, as trees do their leaves; or are ſupported by the internal fire, which threw them up. The firſt is an abſurd aſſertion: the latter a groundleſs and falſe one.

that no artiſt made it, or keeps it in order, or ſhall take it to pieces. On the contrary, the more complete this regularity is, and the longer it laſts, the more fully it ſhows the power of its author; and not only that, but his underſtanding and wiſdom alſo.

Indeed what hath no underſtanding, hath, in ſtrictneſs of ſpeech, no power; cannot act, but only be acted upon: as all mere matter is; which never moves, but as it is moved. But were this doubtful: look around you, and ſee what marks of underſtanding and wiſdom appear. Turn your eyes upon yourſelves: How *fearfully and wonderfully are we made**! Of what an incredible number and variety of parts, (a vaſtly greater than perhaps any of us ſuſpect,) are our bodies compoſed! How were theſe formed and put together at firſt? What hath cauſed, and what hath limited their growth ſince? How hath proper and ſuitable nouriſhment been diſtributed to them all? How hath the perpetual motion of our blood, and of our breath, ſleeping and waking, both of them ſo neceſſary to life, been carried on? How is it, that we move every joint belonging to us, inſtantly, and with ſuch exactneſs, without knowing even which way we go about it? Our ſpeech, our hearing, our ſight, every one of our ſenſes, what amazing contrivance is there in them; and the more amazing, the more ſtrictly we examine them! In the works of men, it is often mere ignorance that occaſions our admiration: but in theſe, the minuter our inſpection and the deeper our ſearch is, the greater abundance we always find of accurate adjuſtments and unimaginable precautions.

But then, beſides ourſelves, the earth is repleniſhed with numberleſs other animals. Thoſe, of which we commonly take notice, are an extremely ſmall part of the whole. Different countries produce very different ſorts. How many, ſtill more different, the great waters conceal from us, we cannot even gueſs. Multitudes remain, ſo little as almoſt to eſcape our ſight, with the beſt aſſiſtance that we are able to give it; and probably multitudes more, which eſcape it intirely. But all that we can obſerve, we find, down to the very leaſt, contrived with the ſame inconceivable art, ſtrangely diverſified, yet uniform at the ſame time, and perfectly fitted by moſt ſurprifing

* Pſal. cxxxix. 14.

priſing inſtincts for their ſeveral ways of living, ſo entirely different each from the other.

What wiſdom and power muſt it be then, which hath peopled the world in this manner, and made ſuch proviſion for the ſupport of all its inhabitants: chiefly by the means of innumerable kinds of herbs and vegetables, juſt as wonderful in their make, as the animals themſelves: that hath intermixed the dry land ſo fitly with ſprings, and rivers, and lakes, and the ocean, to ſupply every thing with neceſſary moiſture, and make the communication of the moſt diſtant parts eaſy: that hath ſurrounded the earth with air for us to breathe in, to convey our voices to each other, and to ſupport clouds for rain: that hath cauſed this air to be moved by winds, which preſerve it healthful: and *bring thoſe, who go down to the ſea in ſhips, unto the haven where they would be**; that hath placed the ſun at ſo exact a diſtance from us, that we are neither burnt up by heat, nor frozen by cold; and hath kept bodies of ſuch incredible bulk, as the heavenly ones, rolling on for thouſands of years together, with ſo orderly and exact a motion, that the returns of day and night, and of the various annual ſeaſons, are preciſely foreknown; and perfectly ſuitable for labour and reſt, and bringing the fruits of the earth to maturity: whereas were almoſt any one of theſe things conſiderably altered, we muſt all of neceſſity periſh.

But then, how ſmall a part of the univerſe our habitation may be; and how many, perhaps greater, wonders the reſt may contain; we cannot ſo much as conjecture. The millions of miles, that are between us and the neareſt of the celeſtial globes, would be aſtoniſhing, if mentioned to you. Yet their diſtance is as nothing, if compared with the furtheſt, which we ſee: and very poſſibly the furtheſt, which we ſee, may be as nothing to many others: every one of which, we have no reaſon to doubt, is as full of regularity, and beauty, and uſe, as our own abode. And from what origin can the whole of this proceed, but that which the Pſalmiſt rapturouſly expreſſes: *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wiſdom haſt thou made them all* †.

To ſpeak of chance, as the cauſe of them, is abſurd beyond meaſure. Chance is merely a word, to expreſs our own ignorance: it is nothing, and can do nothing. Suppoſe one of us

* Pſal. cvii. 23, 30. † Pſal. civ. 24.

us were aſked, how this building, in which we are aſſembled, or the ſmalleſt part of the dreſs which we wear, came to be what it is; and ſhould anſwer that no perſon made it, but it jumped together and held together by chance; would not this be groſs folly? And how ſhockingly foolish muſt it be then, to give the ſame account of the exiſtence of a whole world, ſo admirably contrived, adjuſted and conducted throughout! As evidently therefore as any common piece of work proves a workman to have compoſed it, ſo evidently, and very much more, the immenſe fabric of the univerſe proves a Being of unſpeakable power and ſkill to be the Creator of it.

And accordingly, the belief of a wiſe and mighty Author of all hath been received in every age and nation: which clearly ſhows it to be founded in truth, and written in the hearts of men. They corrupted it gradually indeed: firſt by unworthy repreſentations of the true God, then by adding the worſhip of falſe gods, which at length excluded him. But undeniably the primitive notion was that of an inviſible mind, the Maker and Ruler of this viſible frame: which being plainly under one uniform direction, ſhows itſelf to have one only Sovereign director and governor. This doctrine God himſelf muſt have taught our firſt parents in the beginning; he hath confirmed it ſince by miracles from time to time: and perpetuated the evidence of it in his holy word.

That he is not perceived by any of our ſenſes, is no objection at all againſt his Being. For our minds alſo are imperceptible by ſenſe. But as they, notwithſtanding, ſhew their exiſtence by moving and diſpoſing of our bodies according to their pleaſure; ſo doth God ſhow his, by moving and diſpoſing of all things as he wills. And the ſame argument proves his preſence with all things. For wherever he acts, there he certainly is: and therefore he is every where. Our preſence is limited, and extends a very little way: but what is there to limit him? Our being is derived from his command; and therefore depends on it ſtill: but he is underived; and therefore independent abſolutely. Our powers are only what he hath thought fit to give us: but his power is infinite: for every thing depending on him, nothing can reſiſt him. Our knowledge is every way imperfect: but he who made all things, muſt in the completeſt manner know all things, even the moſt hidden thoughts of the heart. We are often unjuſt

and

and wicked: but God cannot be otherwiſe than juſt and holy. For the only reaſons of our faiſing to do right are, that we either perceive not what is ſo, or elſe are tempted to act contrary to our perceptions: but God is ſubject to no miſtake, or weakneſs of any kind. And, which is the happieſt attribute of all for his Creation, he muſt be likewiſe good. For goodneſs is plainly a right thing; and therefore he muſt ſee it to be ſo: it is plainly a perfection; and therefore the perfecteſt Being muſt poſſeſs it in the higheſt degree. We ſhould be always good ourſelves, if nothing miſled us: and him nothing can miſlead. But the moſt valuable proof is, that we experience his goodneſs: for we live in a world full of it. All that we enjoy, and every capacity of enjoyment that we have, proceeds from him. Moſt of what we ſuffer proceeds from our own faults and follies. And ſo much of it as comes wholly from his providence, is deſigned for our preſent improvement and future reward; unleſs by obſtinate miſbehaviour we become unfit for reward: and then we have only ourſelves to blame. For as God is knowing and wiſe; he cannot but obſerve the difference between good perſons and bad: as he is juſt and holy; he cannot take pleaſure in thoſe, who are otherwiſe: and as he is the Governor of the world; he cannot fail to ſhow his diſpleaſure, in that effectual manner which the ends of government require. And they certainly do require the bad to be puniſhed, as well as the good to be made happy.

Such then is the nature of God: to whom in the Creed the name of *Father* is given, as he is both the Father of the Creation by forming it, and alſo the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thro' him our gracious, and reconciled Father, as ſhall hereafter be explained. The next word, *Almighty*, denotes, not barely his irreſiſtable power, but principally that rightful and abſolute authority, with which *his kingdom ruleth over all**. And the laſt words of the deſcription, *Maker of heaven and earth*, are added; partly to expreſs the ground of that authority, his being the Creator, and therefore the proprietor, of the world; and partly in oppoſition to the errors of the heathen, who worſhipped many beings in the heavens and the earth, as gods; which, in theſe terms of our Creed, are by evident conſequence declared to be no gods, becauſe they

* Pſalm ciii. 19.

they are the work of his hands, *of whom and through whom and to whom are all things* *.

The duties, owing to this our awful Sovereign, will be ſpecified in expounding the ten commandments, particularly the firſt. At preſent therefore I ſhall only beg you to remember the apoſtle's exhortation: *Take heed, brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God* †. Nothing but an evil heart can make unbelief deſirable, or even ſupportable. For to every good heart it muſt be the greateſt joy, to know that the world is governed by infinite wiſdom, juſtice and goodneſs; and the greateſt affliction, to have any doubt of it. If therefore you find the thought of ſuch a governor unwelcome; if you could inwardly wiſh there were none; be aſſured, *your heart is not right* ‡. And though you could, with ſuch a diſpoſition, bring yourſelf almoſt, or completely, to imagine there is none: what poſſible ſecurity can ſhutting your eyes give you againſt danger; or what excuſe can wilfully denying God make for diſobeying him?

But then obſerve further, that ſuppoſing you do not diſbelieve a God at all, yet if you never think of him, this is not, to any good purpoſe, believing in him at all: and if you think of him but ſeldom, it is believing in him but little. He, on whom we depend continually, to whom we owe duty continually, in whoſe preſence we continually are, ought never to be far from our thoughts: but we ſhould ſet him before our eyes ſo conſtantly, as to live in his fear always. Doing this needs not keep us from common buſineſs; it needs not keep us from innocent pleaſures. But it ſhould influence us all effectually, (and happy are we if it doth,) to conduct ourſelves in every thing, as perſons who act under the inſpection of a wiſe and juſt ſuperior: whom we may indeed forget, if we will; but ſhall be remembered by him: from whom we may depart, but cannot eſcape. In our choice it is, whether we will be the better or the worſe for him. But one we muſt: and that beyond expreſſion. *For God will bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing; whether it be good, or whether it be evil* §.

* Rom. xi. 36. † Heb. iii. 12. ‡ Acts viii. 21. § Eccl. 12. 14.

LECTURE VII.

CREED.

Article II.—*And in Jeſus Chriſt his only Son our Lord.*

TO *believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth*, is the univerſal Creed of nature and reaſon. But Divine Revelation adds further profeſſions to it; of which the firſt is, that of faith in our ever bleſſed Redeemer: whoſe direction was, *Ye believe in God: believe alſo in me**. Therefore, that we may believe in him as we ought, he is deſcribed, in the Creed, by his name and offices, his relation to God, and to us.

1. His name, *Jeſus*: by which indeed many of the Jews were called: but it was given him in obedience to an appointment from heaven, made with a peculiar regard to its proper meaning. For it ſignifies, a Saviour: which is a title conferred, in a lower ſenſe, on ſeveral perſons in ſcripture, who delivered others from conſiderable dangers or evils, or obtained for them conſiderable benefits and advantages. Thus the judges of the Iſraelites, that freed them from the oppreſſion of their enemies, are ſaid to be *ſaviours*, whom *God raiſed up*† to them. And Joſhua, who brought them out of the wilderneſs into the land of Canaan, ſubdued it, and put them in poſſeſſion of it, not only was in theſe reſpects a ſaviour to them; but from a foreſight that he would, was called ſo, as his proper name. For *Joſhua* and *Jeſus* are, in the original, the ſame word; only pronounced a little differently. And hence *Joſhua* is conſtantly called *Jeſus* in the Greek language, and even in our tranſlation of the New Teſtament, the two only times that he is mentioned there‡. But if he deſerved to be named a *Saviour*, how much more did that perſon, who hath taught and enabled us to overcome our ſpiritual, which are infinitely our worſt enemies: who hath obtained for us, on moſt equitable terms, deliverance from the puniſhment due t

* John xiv. 1. † Judges iii. 9, 15. Nehem. ix. 27.

‡ Acts vii. 45. Heb. iv. 8.

our guilt; who hath *deſtroyed*, on our behalf, death, and *him that had the power of death* *; and will beſtow on us eternal ſalvation, in the kingdom of heaven? With perfect juſtice therefore was the order given to his Virgin Mother, *Thou ſhalt call his name, Jeſus: for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins* †: only let us remember, that none will be ſaved from them hereafter, that continue to live in them here. For is the holy *Jeſus the miniſter of ſin? God forbid* ‡.

2. His offices are expreſſed by the word, *Chriſt*. This and the Hebrew word, *Meſſiah*, to which it anſwers, in their literal meaning ſignify, *anointed*. Oil was anciently in very high eſteem among the eaſtern nations on various accounts. And, as they were wont to expreſs almoſt every matter of importance by actions, as well as words; one way of ſetting any thing apart, and appropriating it to an honourable uſe, was by anointing it with oil. Therefore we find Jotham, in his parable, makes the *olive tree* ſpeak of its *fatneſs*, as that *wherewith they honour God and man* §. Accordingly the tabernacle, and temple, and their furniture, were conſecrated by anointing them. And almoſt every ſacrifice had oil, mixed with flour, added to it, when it was offered up. Nor was it uſed only to ſuch things, but ſuch perſons, as were diſtinguiſhed in honour above others: To kings; who are thence frequently ſtiled in ſcripture, *The Lord's Anointed*: To prieſts, concerning whom God commands, in the caſe of Aaron and his ſons, *Thou ſhalt anoint them, that they may miniſter to me in the Prieſt's office* ||: And laſtly, to prophets; as where Elijah is directed to *anoint Eliſha prophet in his room* ¶.

And when once, by cuſtom, anointing came to ſignify raiſing any one to a ſtation of dignity, the ſame word was uſed, even on occaſions where no oil was actually employed*. Thus when *Elijah* was bid to *aneint Hazael to be king over Syria, and Eliſha for prophet in his own room*: we find not that he ever did it

* Heb. ii. 14. † Matth. i. 21. ‡ Gal. ii. 17. § Judg. ix. 9.
|| Exod. xl. 15. ¶ Kings xix. 16.

* The Jews ſay that משיחה, *Unction*, ſignifies, *principality* and *greatneſs*, ענין קציניות וגדולה. Reland. Ant. Hebr. ar. 2. c. 8. § 6. and ſee this further proved, ib. c. 9. § 6.

it literally *. Again, when God is introduced, as saying of the Jewish Patriarchs, before Moses, *Touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harm* †: we have no ground to think, that they were ever intitled to this name by any solemn outward unction, performed upon them: but only by the distinguished favour and regard of Heaven. And in this sense it was, that *God anointed* our Saviour *with the oil of gladness above his fellows* ‡: that is, exalted him to a rank of dignity and honour beyond all creatures. For in his person were united those three offices, in the highest degree, to which, you have seen, persons were anciently set apart by anointing.

He is the greatest Prophet, that ever was: having given to mankind the fullest knowledge of God's will, and confirmed his doctrine by the most illustrious miracles and predictions. Hence Isaiah, speaking in his name, long before his appearance, gave that description of him, which he so justly in the Synagogue applied to himself: The *Spirit of the Lord is upon me, he hath anointed me* § *to preach the gospel to the poor* ||. And St Peter, after his resurrection, says, that *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power.* What these words mean, the next explain: *who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him* ¶: and the whole means just the same thing, with what he elsewhere says, that he was *a man approved of God by miracles and wonders and signs* *.

In the next place, he is a Priest of an order, strictly speaking, confined to his own person, and of which no other ever was or can be; though in some respects the Priesthood of Melchizedeck peculiarly resembled and prefigured it. He offered up himself for the sins of mankind, as shall hereafter be explained to you. With this sacrifice he appeared before God, *not in the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but in heaven itself* †; made reconciliation for us with him, derives to us continually blessings from him; and thus remains for ever *an High Priest over the house of God* ‡:

* See 1 Kings xix. 15, 16. Comp. v. 19. and 2 Kings viii. 13.
† Psal. cv. 15. ‡ Psal. xiv. 7. § Chald. doth not understand the anointing here to be with material oil. || Isa. lxi. 1, Luke iv. 18.
¶ Acts x. 38. * Acts ii. 22. † Heb. ix. 24. ‡ Heb. x. 21.

compared with with whom, the Jewiſh Prieſthood, and the ſacrifices, which they were daily making, were but as empty ſhadows to the real ſubſtance.

But laſtly, he is in the higheſt ſenſe a king; King and Lord of all. Hence in the ſecond pſalm, he is called the *Lord's Anointed*, whom he *hath ſet* to be *King on his holy hill of Sion* *. Hence, in Iſaiah it is propheſied, that he ſhould *ſit upon the throne of David*, (that is, reign over the people of God) to *order and eſtabliſh it well for ever* †. And hence his title in Daniel is, *Meſſiah the Prince* ‡, or the anointed Prince: the *Son of Man, to whom dominion ſhall be given, and a kingdom; that all people, nations and languages, ſhould ſerve him* §. The completion of theſe prophecies we find in the New Teſtament: where, as he profeſſes himſelf *a King*, but *not of a kingdom of this world* ||; ſo we find him, *after the ſuffering of death, crowned with glory and honour* ¶, infinitely ſuperior to the higheſt of mortal potentates: *all power being given unto him in heaven and in earth* *; *and a name above every name, that is named in this world and that to come* †: for which reaſon he is in the revelation ſtiled, *King of kings, and Lord of lords* ‡. This kingly power he exerciſes, partly by giving laws, which every one is bound to obey, and no one may alter, diminiſh, or add to them: partly by protecting his church againſt all its enemies, viſible and inviſible, ſo that neither ſhall at any time totally prevail againſt it; partly by conducting every member of it, who is dutiful to him, in the way of peace and happineſs, through the grace of his Spirit, and the miniſtry of his ordinances: and finally he will, in the moſt conſpicuous manner, diſplay his regal power, by everlaſtingly rewarding his faithful ſubjects; and puniſhing all, who have rejected his authority, rebelled againſt it, or diſobeyed it.

Theſe then are the offices, to which God hath anointed, that is, raiſed and exalted him: and in reſpect of which he is called the Chriſt. Let us all be careful to receive him ſuitably to them: and ſo hearken to him as our Prophet; that we may partake of his atonement, as our Prieſt; and live under his protection as our King, for ever and ever.

3. The next thing, mentioned in the Creed, concerning our Saviour

* Pſal. ii. 2, 6. † Iſa. ix. 7. ‡ Dan. ix. 25.
§ Dan. vii. 13, 14. || John xviii. 33, 36. ¶ Heb. ii. 9.
* Matth. xxviii. 18. † Phil. ii. 9. Eph. i. 21. ‡ Rev. xix. 16.

Saviour, is the relation, which he bears to God, as the *only Son* of the Father Almighty. Indeed the ſcripture ſpeaks of God, as the Father of all men; and of all that are good, as his ſons. Good Chriſtians are ſo in a higher ſenſe, than other good men. Angels are the ſons of God, in a degree ſtill ſuperior to them. But yet, all other ſonſhips are ſo inconceivably inferior to that of Chriſt, that they are in compariſon as nothing; and he deſerves notwithſtanding to be called, as he is ſeveral times called in ſcripture, *the only begotten Son* of God*; which greateſt of titles appears to be his due, on ſeveral accounts.

Firſt, Becauſe, being born of a virgin, he had no earthly father; but was begotten of God by his Holy Spirit. This reaſon the angel gives, in St Luke. *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee: therefore that Holy Thing which ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called the Son of God* †.

Secondly, As by virtue of the above-mentioned offices, to which he was anointed, he received higher marks of Divine favour, and higher degrees of divine likeneſs, than any other perſon ever did. For, as himſelf argues with the Jews, if, on account of mere earthly power and dignity, men were called *gods, and children of the Moſt High* ‡; much more might he, *whom the Father ſanctified, and ſent into the world*, in ſo vaſtly ſuperior a character, be ſtiled, by way of eminence, *the Son of God* §. And thus is he accordingly ſtiled, on this account: *I will be his Father, and he ſhall be my Son* ||: *alſo I will make him my firſt born, higher than the kings of the earth* ¶.

Thirdly, He is the Son of God, as being by the power of God *the firſt begotten of the dead* ⁂, reſtored to life to die no more. For thus St Paul expreſſes it: *God hath raiſed up Jeſus again, as it is alſo written, Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee* ⁂.

Fourthly, He is ſo, as being *Heir of all things* ‡‡, and *by this inheritance having obtained a more excellent name, than* men or *angels* §§: they being as *ſervants in the houſe of God, he as a Son* |||.

But

* John i. 14, 18. iii. 16, 18. John iv. 9. † Luke i. 35. ‡ Pſal. lxxxii. 6. § John x. 34, &c. || 2 Sam. vii. 14. 1 Chron. xvii. 13. Heb. i. 5. ¶ Pſal. lxxxix. 27. ⁂ Rev. i. 5. ⁂ Acts xiii. 33, ‡‡ Heb. i. 2. §§ Ibid. 4. ||| Heb. iii. 5, 6.

But the moſt important and eminent ſenſe, in which Chriſt is the Son of God, remains yet to be mentioned: as, in reſpect of his Divine Nature, he derived his being from the Father, by an eternal generation; not as creatures do, who are made out of nothing, and were made by him; but in a manner peculiar to himſelf, and inconceivable to us: by which *all the fulneſs of the Godhead dwells in him* *; and *he and the Father are*, in the ſtricteſt union, *one* †. For God was his *Father, with whom he had glory before the world was* ‡: and he *in the beginning was with God, and was God* §; *God over all, bleſſed for ever* ‖. Of this myſterious doctrine, I ſhall ſpeak ſomewhat further, under the article of the Holy Ghoſt: and therefore ſhall only ſay at preſent, that being expreſsly revealed, it ought to be implicitely believed; without attempting in vain to be wiſe above what is written; to know more, than God hath enabled us. And now,

4thly, From all theſe things ariſes, what the Creed mentions in the laſt place, his relation to us; *our Lord:* For being the only Son of God, he is Heir and Lord of all in his Father's houſe. Having triumphed over the power of darkneſs, which held mankind in bondage, we are his by right of conqueſt: and though "other lords have had dominion over us, we are now to make mention of his name only ¶," as ſuch: having purchaſed us to him for "a peculiar people *," with his own blood, "we are not our own; for we are bought with a price †:" "and he died for all, that they, which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him, which died for them, and roſe again ‡‡." "For to this end Chriſt both died, and roſe and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living §§;" that he might be ſuch, not in the name only, but in deed and reality alſo. For "not every one that ſaith unto him, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of his Father, which is in Heaven ‖‖." To all others his words will be at the great day, what they were whilſt on earth: "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I ſay ¶¶?"

Obedience,

* Col. ii. 9. † John x. 30. ‡ John xvii. 5. § John i. 1.
‖ Rom. ix. 5. ¶ Iſa. xxvi. 13. * Tit. ii. 14. † 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.
‡‡ 2 Cor. v. 15. §§ Rom. xiv. 9. ‖‖ Mat. vii. 21. ¶¶ Luke vi. 46.

Obedience, conſtant, univerſal obedience, is the only manner of acknowledging him, that will finally prove acceptable to him: and in that manner we have ſolemnly promiſed that we will acknowledge him, and ſerve him all our days. Thus then let us ever honour him; thus let us aſcribe to him, who is our Prophet, our Prieſt, and our King, our Saviour, our Lord, and our God, "Glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen*."

* 1 Pet. iv. 11. v. 11. Rev. i. 6.

LECTURE VIII.

CREED.

Article III.—*Who was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, born of the Virgin Mary.*

AFTER ſetting forth, in general, the name and offices of our bleſſed Redeemer, his relation to the Father and to us; our Creed goes on to recount the ſeveral particulars of what he did and ſuffered, what he continues to do ſtill, and will do finally, for our ſalvation.

The firſt of theſe is, that "the Word was made fleſh*:" that the eternal Son of God, wonderfully joining to himſelf a body and ſoul like ours, united the human nature with the divine into one perſon: thus becoming liable to the ſame neceſſities and wants, infirmities and pains; and endued with the ſame innocent paſſions, appetites and affections, that we are: on which account we read in the goſpels of his feeling hunger, and pity, and grief, and anger, nay, and *increaſing*, as *in ſtature*, ſo *in wiſdom* alſo†: not ſurely in reſpect of that nature,

* John i. 14. † Luke ii. 52.

ture, which "in the beginning was with God, and was God *," but of the other, by which he was the Man Chriſt Jeſus †. Further than theſe facts, we are not diſtinctly acquainted with the extent and properties of this unparalleled union. And it is no wonder, that we are not. For even that of our own ſouls with our own bodies hath many things in it, utterly beyond our comprehenſion. We muſt therefore in all reaſon, without inſiſting to know, "how theſe things can be ‡;" confine ourſelves to learn from ſcripture, what they are. And it hath plainly taught us, that our bleſſed Lord "was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, and born of the Virgin Mary."

Concerning the Holy Ghoſt, there will be a proper place to ſpeak more at large, in that article of the Creed, which directly relates to him. At preſent we are only to conſider his influence in the conception of our Saviour: which conception was not in the ordinary courſe of things; but God himſelf, being already his Father with reſpect to that Divine nature, which he had from the beginning, became again ſo, in a new ſenſe, with reſpect to his human nature too, by the incomprehenſible operation of his Spirit. For "the birth of Jeſus Chriſt," to uſe the words of ſcripture, "was on this wiſe. When as his mother Mary was eſpouſed to Joſeph; before they came together, ſhe was found with child of the Holy Ghoſt §;" in purſuance of what the angel had told her, "Thou ſhalt conceive and bring forth a Son, and ſhalt call his name Jeſus. Then ſaid Mary unto the Angel; How ſhall this be, ſeeing I know not a man? And the angel anſwered and ſaid unto her: The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the Power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee: therefore alſo that holy Thing, which ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called the Son of God ||."

And thus, in the fulneſs of time, was accompliſhed, what had been intimated as early as the fall of man, by that remarkable expreſſion, that the "Seed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the Serpent's head ¶;" and what had been expreſsly ſpoken out by the Prophet Iſaiah, 700 years before our Saviour's Incarnation, "Behold a virgin ſhall be with child, and bring forth

* John i. 1. † 1 Tim. ii. 5. ‡ John iii. § Mat. i. 18.
|| Luke i. 31, 34, 35. ¶ Gen. iii. 15.

forth a ſon, and they ſhall call his name Emmanuel: which, being interpreted, is, God with us*." When the ſcripture ſays, that ſuch a perſon or thing ſhall be called by ſuch a name; it frequently means no more, than that they ſhall have a right to be ſo called; that what that name ſignifies, ſhall be verified in them, ſhall be true in relation to them. There are many inſtances of this in the Old Teſtament. And therefore, as our Saviour's coming in the fleſh was the moſt effectual and illuſtrious manifeſtation of God's preſence with men, and favour towards them, that could be; though perhaps in common ſpeech he was ſeldom, if ever, called, yet in the language of prophecy he was very juſtly called, *Emmanuel*, or, God is with us. For in his perſon God was really amongſt men, in ſuch a manner, and to ſuch purpoſes of grace and ſalvation, as he had never been before. And therefore this name agrees perfectly in ſenſe, though it differs in ſound, from his common name, *Jeſus*, i. e. Saviour.

After ſaying, that he was *born of a virgin*, the Creed adds, that it was of the Virgin Mary: not that we are to ſeek for any peculiar myſtery in her being called Mary; as ſome in the church of Rome have imagined, and accordingly formed groundleſs and ridiculous derivations of the word. But indeed the name was a very common one among the Jews; by which ſeveral women, mentioned in the New Teſtament, and ſeveral in other hiſtories, went: and no intimation is given in ſcripture of its having any eſpecial propriety, or meaning, in relation to her. But the reaſon of inſerting it into the Creed moſt probably was, becauſe it is ſet down in ſcripture, and that, by naming the particular perſon of whom our Saviour ſprung, he might appear to be of that family, from which it was foretold he ſhould ariſe, being born of the *Virgin of the Houſe of David*†.

Still we are very far from thinking lowly of one, whom firſt an Angel from Heaven, then "Elizabeth filled with the Holy Ghoſt," declared to be "bleſſed among women‡;" and who, with the greateſt reaſon ſaid of herſelf, "He, that is mighty, hath magnified me, and holy is his name§." For

* Iſa. vii. 14. Mat. i. 23. † Luke i. 27. ‡ Luke i. 28, 42, 42.
§ Luke i. 49

greatly without doubt ſhe was magnified, a high honour ſhe received, in becoming, as Elizabeth ſtiles her, "the mother of our Lord *." But this, however ſingular, was not the moſt valuable diſtinction of the holy Virgin. In ſcripture, no advantage of any other kind is ever put on a level with that of a pious heart, and a virtuous life. On the contrary, when on hearing one of our Saviour's diſcourſes, "a certain woman of the company," in a tranſport of admiration and affection, had cried out, "Bleſſed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou haſt ſucked:" his anſwer was, "Yea, rather bleſſed are they, that hear the word of God and keep it †." Now of this trueſt bleſſedneſs the Virgin Mary enjoyed a moſt eminent ſhare: appearing, in all that is ſaid of her, to have been pious and devout, reaſonable and conſiderate, humble and modeſt, mild and gracious, in the utmoſt degree.

But though, on account of theſe excellencies, as well as her peculiar relation to him, ſhe was the object, both of her Son's dutiful ſubjection in his younger years; and of his tender care even when he hung upon the croſs: yet we find no footſteps of any ſuch regard paid her, either by him or his diſciples, as can give the leaſt pretence for aſcribing to her thoſe prerogatives and powers, which the church of Rome doth. Our Saviour, in more places than one of the goſpels, treats her in ſo cold and ſeemingly negligent a manner, that one cannot well avoid thinking he did it on purpoſe, to diſcourage that monſtrous notion, of her right, as a mother, to command him, who was her Lord as well as ours. In the other parts of the New Teſtament, excepting thoſe which I have already quoted, or to which I have referred, there is only an incidental mention made of her occaſionally; as there is of many other perſons: and not the moſt diſtant intimation of any ſpecial honour ſhown, or directed to be ſhown her. Yet doth the Romiſh church appoint offices of devotion to her, bearing her name; addreſs her as *Queen of heaven*, for ſo they expreſsly call her: petition her, almoſt in the ſame breath with God and our Saviour, that ſhe would beſtow on them pardon and grace here, and everlaſting life hereafter: Things infinitely beyond the power of any creature whatever. Nay, ſome of them profeſſedly bind themſelves to pray much oftener to her, than they

* Luke i. 43. † Luke xi. 27, 28.

they do to their Maker and Redeemer: and appear accordingly to place much more confidence in her. And all this, not only without the leaſt proof, that ſhe hath any authority in human affairs, or even any knowledge of them; but in open defiance of the ſcripture, which directs our prayers to God alone; and particularly of that paſſage in St Paul, where the *voluntary humility* of *worſhipping* even *angels*, though they are known to be *miniſtring ſpirits*, is forbidden, as what may *beguile us of our reward*; and the perſons, who practiſe it, condemned, as *not holding the Head*, which is Chriſt *.

But to return to our ſubject. The foregoing doctrine, of "God manifeſt in the fleſh," is undoubtedly one very wonderful part of that, which the apoſtle calls "the myſtery of godlineſs †." And yet there is nothing in it, either impoſſible, or indeed more difficult to the Almighty, than in thoſe productions of his, which we commonly call the courſe of nature; and wonder at them leſs, for no other reaſon, but becauſe we ſee them conſtantly; the manner of both being equally inconceivable.

And as the miraculous conception, and birth of Chriſt, was eaſy to infinite power: ſo was it undoubtedly proper and fit, ſince it was choſen by infinite wiſdom. Indeed, ſome foot-ſteps of that wiſdom even we may be able to trace in this wonderful diſpenſation. It appears moſt becoming the dignity of ſo extraordinary a perſon, not to enter into the world in the ordinary manner. As the Firſt Adam, poſſeſſed of original uprightneſs, was formed immediately by the hand of God; it was ſuitable that the Second Adam, who came to reſtore that uprightneſs, ſhould not be inferior, but indeed ſuperior, in that reſpect. Accordingly we read, that "the firſt man was of the earth, earthy: the ſecond, the Lord from heaven ‡." It ſeems requiſite alſo, that he, who was deſigned both for a ſpotleſs example to us, and a ſpotleſs ſacrifice to God, ſhould be perfectly free from every degree of that impurity, and inward irregularity, which the tainted nature of a fallen earthly father may, for aught we know, according to the eſtabliſhed laws of this world, communicate: whereas, being produced in the manner that he was may have qualified him perfectly

* Col. ii. 18, 19. Heb. i. 14. † 1 Tim. iii. 16. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47.

for becoming, both a "Lamb without blemiſh *," and a High Prieſt, in every reſpect and degree, "holy and undefiled, and ſeparte from ſinners †."

But whether theſe or others, concealed from us for wiſe, though perhaps unſearchable ends, were the reaſons why his incarnation was in this manner; yet, for his being incarnate, there are ſeveral weighty reaſons very evident; and poſſibly many more, intirely unſeen by us.

By becoming man, he was capable of becoming the moſt complete and engaging pattern of virtue to man. The example of the inviſible God might ſeem too high, and too remote from our view. The examples of men were all, in one reſpect or another, faulty, and likely to miſlead us. But our bleſſed Saviour, by joining in his own perſon perfection with humanity, gives us the moſt encouraging invitation to endeavour at doing ſo too, according to our power. He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without ſin ‡;" "to leave us an example, that we might follow his ſteps §." But in particular, by this means he hath ſet us the brighteſt example of that excellent virtue, humility, that ever was, or could be; to this intent, that "the ſame mind might be in us, which was in him: who being in the form of God, took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of men ||." Of mutual love alſo he hath ſet before us the moſt amiable pattern, by this amazing proof of his love to mankind. He, who "was rich," in all the glories of God, "became poor for our ſakes; that we, through his poverty, might become rich ¶," in heavenly bleſſings. He, who was exempted from all ſuffering, ſuffered every thing terrible in life and death for our good. Surely theſe are powerful motives both to give up, and do, and undergo, whatever we are called to, for our brethren; and to "love one another as he hath loved us **." His reſignation likewiſe, his meekneſs, his zeal, his prudence, every one of his virtues, (and his whole character was compoſed of virtues,) are moſt uſeful leſſons, derived from his appearing in our nature, that in a very peculiar manner command our attention, and require our imitation.

But further ſtill; by becoming Man he had the means of moſt

* Exod. xii. 5. † Heb. vii. 26. ‡ Heb. iv. 15. § 1 Pet. ii. 21.
|| Phil. ii. 5, 6, 7. ¶ 2 Cor. viii. 9. ** John xv. 12.

moſt familiarly and beneficially inſtructing men, in every point of faith and practice. "The Word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, and of his fulneſs have we all received *." This condeſcenſion enabled him to accommodate his manner of teaching to the capacities and diſpoſitions of his diſciples, to remove their prejudices, inſinuate truth into their minds gradually; and thus gently training them up to the kingdom of heaven, lay ſuch deep foundations of his church, as ſhall never be moved.

By taking upon him our nature, he was likewiſe capable of being a ſacrifice for our ſins; a doctrine, which in its proper place ſhall be explained to you: Therefore, ſince we "are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf took part of the ſame, that, through death, he might deſtroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil †."

And there was another benefit, conſequent to his ſuffering in our nature, *viz.* His riſing again in it; and thus giving us the fulleſt certainty of our own reſurrection unto eternal life.

Even while he ſits at the right hand of the Father, interceding for his church, and ruling over it, his being man both makes him a proper perſon to repreſent men, and offer up their devotions: and affords us the moſt ſenſible aſſurance of his knowing the wants, and being touched with the neceſſities, of the nature in which he ſhares. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him," ſays the apoſtle, "to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Prieſt in things pertaining unto God. For, in that he himſelf hath ſuffered, being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted ‡." Seeing then that we have not a High Prieſt, that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but one, who was in all points tempted, like as we are: we may come boldly to the throne of grace," in confidence of "obtaining mercy, and finding grace to help, in time of need §." And ſince, laſtly, we have a Judge appointed us, who hath experienced whereof we are made; we may be in the utmoſt degree certain, that his judgement will be according to equity: that, on the one hand, all due allowances will be

* John i. 14, 16. † Heb. ii. 14. ‡ Heb. ii. 17, 18.
§ Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16.

be made to us; and, on the other, no undue ones muſt be expected by us, in that day, "when God will judge the world in righteouſneſs by that man, whom he hath ordained*;" and to whom he hath "given authority to execute judgment, becauſe he is the Son of Man†."

* Acts xvii. 31. † John v. 27.

LECTURE IX.

CREED.

Article IV.—*Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he deſcended into hell.*

IMMEDIATELY after the mention of our Saviour's birth, the Creed goes on to the mention of his ſufferings: for indeed his whole ſtate on earth was a ſuffering ſtate. By condeſcending to be "made in the likeneſs of men*," he expoſed himſelf to all the neceſſities, infirmities, and pains, to which men are naturally ſubject. Beſides this, he underwent the many inconveniences of a low and unſettled condition. And, which was yet much heavier, though his whole life was ſpent in *doing good* †, yet was it ſpent alſo in bearing troubles and uneaſineſſes from all around him.

The prejudices and miſapprehenſions of his kindred and diſciples were no ſmall trial. But the perverſeneſs and malice of his enemies was a great one beyond example. They were no leſs perſons than the rulers and guides of the Jewiſh people, with their blind followers: whom the purity and humility of his doctrine, and the very needful ſeverity of his reproofs for their pride, ſuperſtition, and wickedneſs, had rendered

* Phil. ii. 7. † Acts x. 38.

dered implacable againſt him. Every condeſcenſion to win them gained only contempt from them: every endeavour to convince and reform them did but exaſperate them: they miſrepreſented and derided, they reviled and threatened, they aſſaulted and perſecuted him: till at length, the hour being come, which he knew was the proper one to yield himſelf up to them; they bribed one of his diſciples to betray him into their hands; terrified the reſt into forſaking him; and, after a moſt unjuſt condemnation, followed by a variety of deſpiteful uſage amongſt themſelves, to obtain the execution of their ſentence they accuſed him to the Roman power; firſt as a blaſphemer againſt their law; and, failing in this, then as a rebel againſt the Emperor, Tiberius Cæſar, the moſt ſuſpicious of men: by which laſt ſuggeſtion they forced the governor, though declaring himſelf to be ſatisfied of his innocence, yet to comply with them for his own ſafety. After this he was abuſed and ſcourged by the ſoldiers, crowned in cruel mockery with thorns, and loaded, probably till he ſunk under it, with the croſs, on which he was to ſuffer.

This inſtrument of death conſiſted, as its name denotes, of two large pieces of wood, croſſing each other. On one, the arms of the condemned perſon were ſtretched out, and his hands nailed; on the other, his feet, joined together, were faſtened in the ſame manner: and thus he was to hang naked, expoſed to heat and cold, till pain and faintneſs ended his life. The Jews, while they executed their own laws, never crucified any, till they were firſt put to death ſome other way; after which, their bodies were ſometimes hanged on a tree till the evening. But it ſeems, that only the worſt of malefactors were thus treated; who are therefore ſtiled in the law of Moſes, *accurſed**. The Romans indeed, and other nations, crucified men alive: but uſually none beſides their ſlaves; a ſort of perſons, moſt of them, far lower than the loweſt of ſervants amongſt us.

This then was what the Son of God underwent, when, having "taken upon him the form of a ſervant, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs†." Now the torment of hanging thus by nails, that pierced through parts of ſo acute a feeling as the hands and feet, could not but be exquiſite;

* Deut. xxi. 23. † Phil. ii. 7, 8.

exquiſite; eſpecially as it was almoſt always of long duration. And therefore this puniſhment was accounted, in every reſpect, the ſevereſt of any. Our Saviour indeed continued under it only about three hours: a much ſmaller time, though a dreadful one, than was uſual. And there are plain reaſons for his expiring ſo ſoon. He had ſuffered, the whole night before, and all that day, a courſe of barbarous treatment, ſufficient to wear down the ſtrength of a much rougher and robuſter make, than probably his was. Before this, he had felt agonies within, grievous enough to make him "ſweat, as it were, great drops of blood *." Partly the near view of what he was juſt going, moſt undeſervedly, to ſuffer, might thus affect a mind, which, having ſo much tenderneſs and ſenſibility in the caſe of others, could not be without ſome proportionable degree of it in his own. And further, the thought, how ſadly, from the time of their creation to that day, men had contradicted the end for which they were created; how large a part of the world would ſtill reject the ſalvation which he came to offer, and how few receive it effectually; what guilt even good perſons often contract, and how tremendous will be the final doom of bad ones: theſe reflections, which naturally would all preſent themſelves to him in the ſtrongeſt light on this great occaſion, could not but cauſe vehement emotions in his breaſt, zealous as he was for the glory of God, and the eternal happineſs of men. But chiefly beyond compariſon, the awful ſenſe, that he was to bear all theſe innumerable ſins of mankind "in his own body on the tree †," "being made a curſe for us, to redeem us from the curſe of the law ‡," might well produce feelings inexpreſſible and inconceivable, which, operating much more powerfully than mere bodily tortures, and making "his ſoul exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death §," might ſo exhauſt his ſtrength by heightening his ſufferings, as to ſhorten them very conſiderably. And accordingly we read, that when he had hung on the croſs from the ſixth hour to the ninth, he cried with a loud voice, in the words of the twenty-ſecond pſalm, where David ſpeaks, as a type and repreſentative both of his ſufferings and his following glory, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? not in the leaſt intending, as David before him did not, to ſignify a diſtruſt of

* Luke xxii. 44. † 1 Pet. ii. 24. ‡ Gal. iii. 13. § Mat. xxvi. 38.

of his love, in whom at the ſame time he claimed an intereſt, as his God; but only to expreſs, that thoſe comforts of the Divine Preſence, which he uſed to feel, were now, for myſterious reaſons, with-held from him in that concluding *hour* of temptation, which himſelf ſo emphatically called, *the power of darkneſs* *. Then adding words of the firmeſt truſt, *Father, into thy hands I commend my ſpirit, he bowed his head, and gave up the ghoſt* †.

Thus did God fulfil what he before had ſhewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer ‡. It was intimated in the firſt prediction, made upon the fall; namely, that the *ſeed of the woman* ſhould be *bruiſed* §. It was prefigured, both in the ſacrifices of the Old Teſtament, and ſeveral remarkable portions of its hiſtory. He is mentioned by David, as having "his hands and feet pierced ||:" He is largely deſcribed by Iſaiah, as "a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief; wounded and bruiſed for our iniquities, and brought as a Lamb to the ſlaughter ¶:" He is expreſsly ſtiled by Daniel, *Meſſiah the Prince*, that ſhould be *cut off* *.

Theſe prophecies, the Creed informs us, were fulfilled under Pontius Pilate: for ſo was the then governor of Judea under the Roman Emperor called. And he is named, becauſe the moſt uſual way of ſignifying at what time any thing was done, anciently was by mentioning the perſon, under whoſe government it was done: there not being any other method of reckoning univerſally received, as that of counting by the year of our Lord is now among Chriſtians. And it was very uſeful to preſerve the memory of the date: partly, that in after-ages inquiry might be better made into the hiſtories and records of that age, concerning theſe extraordinary events, ſaid to have then happened; and chiefly, that the Meſſiah might appear to have come and died at that exact *fulneſs of time* †; when it was foretold he ſhould. One mark of it was, that the *ſceptre* was then to be *departed from Judah* ††: which evidently was departed, when it was reduced to be a Roman Province. Another was, that the ſecond temple was to be yet ſtanding; for the *glory of it* was to be *greater than the glory*

* Luke xxii. 53. † Luke xxiii. 46. John xix. 30. ‡ Acts iii. 18.
§ Gen. iii. 15. || Pſal. xxii. 17. ¶ Iſa. liii. 3, 5, 7. * Dan. ix. 25, 26.
† Gal. iv. 4. †† Gen. xlix. 10.

of the former *; and this could be true only by the fulfilling of another prophecy, "The Lord, whom ye ſeek, ſhall come to his temple, even the meſſenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in †." Accordingly he did come to it, and it ſtood but a few years longer. A third mark was, that, from "the reſtoring of Jeruſalem, to the Meſſiah's being cut off ‡," were to be ſuch a number of weeks; each plainly conſiſting, not of ſeven days, but of ſeven years: which number was completed, while Pontius Pilate was Governor: and therefore it was requiſite to obſerve, that under him our Saviour ſuffered.

Next to the mention of his death, in the Creed, follows that of his burial: a favour not allowed by the Romans to thoſe who were crucified, unleſs ſome conſiderable perſon interceded for it. But the Jewiſh law requiring, that they ſhould be taken down and buried before night §; and the next day being a great feſtival, when the violation of this law would give more than ordinary offence to the people; "Joſeph of Arimathea, an honourable counſellor, who alſo waited for the kingdom of God, craved the body of Jeſus from Pilate:" who, after making due enquiry, "if he were already, and had been any while dead, gave the body to Joſeph;" who buried him reſpectfully "in his own new tomb, a ſepulchre hewn out of a rock ‖;" the entrance into which the Jews ſealed up, and ſet a guard over ¶. And thus were his own predictions fulfilled, that he ſhould be crucified **, the moſt unlikely of all deaths: and at the ſame time that of Iſaiah, that he ſhould not only be buried, but with the moſt unlikely of all burials in ſuch a caſe, "making his grave with the rich ††."

The laſt part of this article is, that "he deſcended into hell:" an aſſertion founded on pſalm xvi. 10. where David prophefies of Chriſt, what St Peter in the Acts of the Apoſtles explains of him ‡‡, that "his ſoul ſhould not be left in hell;" which imports, that once he was there. And hence, after ſome time it was inſerted into our Creed, which in the beginning had it not. However, being taught in ſcripture, the truth

* Hag. ii. 9. † Mal. iii. 1. ‡ Dan. ix. 25, 26.
§ Deut. xxi. 22, 23. ‖ Mat. xxvii. 57,—60. Mark xv. 43,—46.
Luke xxiii. 50,—53. ¶ Mat. xxvii. 62,—66 ** Mat. xx. 19.
John iii. 14. xii. 32, 33. †† Iſa. liii. 9. ‡‡ Acts ii. 24,—32.

truth of this doctrine is undubitable: the only question is about the meaning of it.

The first thought of most, or all persons, to be sure, will be, that the word *hell*, in this article, signifies what it doth in common speech, the place where devils and wicked men are punished. And it hath been imagined, that Christ went to triumph over the devil there; and some add, to rescue part of the souls which he held under confinement *, by *preaching*, as the scripture saith he did, *to the spirits that were in prison* †. But the place of torment is never determinately expressed in scripture by the word *hades*, which both the scripture and the Creed use in this article, but by very different ones; though unhappily our translation hath used the same English word for both, instead of calling the former, what it strictly signifies, the invisible state or region. Besides, we do not read of our Saviour's *triumphing* over the devil any where, but *on the cross* ‡. And *the spirits in prison*, to whom St Peter saith Christ *by his Spirit preached*, he saith also were those, *which were disobedient, while the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah* §. And therefore Christ's *preaching to them by his Spirit* probably means, his exciting by *his Spirit*, which *strove with* ‖ them for a time, that Patriarch to be a *preacher of righteousness* among them, as the same St Peter, in his other epistle, calls him ¶. But not hearkening to him then, they are now in prison, reserved for the sentence of the last day. This opinion therefore hath no sufficient foundation. Nor would it be found, on further trial, agreeable either to reason or scripture.

Others have thought the word, translated *hell*, to signify in this article, as it seems to do in some passages of the Old Testament, and the English word anciently did, merely a place under ground, by which they understand the grave. And they plead for it, that the first Creeds, which mentioned our Saviour's descending into hell, used no other words to express his being buried, and therefore designed to express it by these. But allowing that, still our Creed, expressing the de-

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* Origen against Celsus, l. 2. § 42. saith, that Christ converted souls to himself there, τας βουλομενας, η ἀς εωρα επιτηδειοτερας.

† 1 Pet. iii. 19. ‡ Col. ii. 14, 15. § 1 Pet. iii. 20. ‖ Gen. vi. 3.

¶ 2 Pet. ii. 5.

ſcent into hell after the burial, muſt mean a different thing by it.

And indeed the moſt common meaning, not only among heathens, but Jews and the firſt Chriſtians, of the word *hades*, here tranſlated *hell*, was in general that inviſible world, one part or another of which, the ſouls of the deceaſed, whether good or bad, inhabit. And this, how ſtrange ſoever it may, ſeem to the unlearned, yet is by others acknowledged *. Probably therefore, all that was intended to be taught by the expreſſion, now before us, is, that when our Saviour died, as his body was laid in the grave, ſo his Spirit went where other ſeparate ſpirits are. And we ſhould remember, in repeating theſe words of the Creed, that this is the whole of what we are bound to profeſs by them. But in what part of ſpace, or of what nature, that receptacle is, in which the ſouls of men continue from their death till they riſe again, we ſcarce know at all: excepting that we are ſure it is divided into two extremely different regions, the dwelling of the righteous, called in St Luke, *Abraham's boſom*, where *Lazarus* was; and that of the wicked, where *the rich man* was; *between which there is a great gulph fixed* †. And we have no proof, that our Saviour went on any account into the latter: but ſince he told the penitent thief, that *he ſhould be that day with him in paradiſe* ‡; we are certain he was in the former; where *they, which die in the Lord, reſt from their labours*, and *are* bleſſed §; waiting for a ſtill more perfect happineſs at the reſurrection of the laſt day.

How the ſoul of our Saviour was employed in this abode, or for what reaſons he continued there during this time, further than that he might *be like unto his brethren in all things* ||, we are not told, and need not gueſs. But probably this article was made part of the Creed, in order to aſſert and prove, that he had really a human ſoul, which was really ſeparated from his body. And its reſidence, during the ſeparation, in the

* See Pearſon on this article, p. 239, 240. † Luke xvi. 22, 23, 26.

‡ Luke xxiii. 45. Non ex his verbis in cœlo exiſtimandus eſt eſſe paradiſus. Neque enim ipſo die in cœlo futurus erat homo Chriſtus Jeſus: ſed in inferno ſecundum animam, in ſepulchro autem ſecundum carnem. Aug. Ep. 57. ad Dardanum. Pearſon, p. 237.

§ Rev. xiv. 13. || Heb. ii. 17.

the ſame ſtate and place, where other *ſpirits of juſt men made perfect* * are, ſurely made a vaſt addition to their felicity. For Abraham, who *rejoiced to ſee his day* † at a diſtance, muſt be inexpreſſibly more rejoiced to ſee him preſent there. All the good perſons, whoſe going thither preceded the death of our Lord, muſt certainly partake in the joy. And all who came, or ſhall come, after, muſt feel much greater conſolation for being in a place, where their Redeemer had been ſeen by ſuch numbers of his ſaints; and to which, in ſome peculiar ſenſe, his preſence is yet continued: for we learn from St Paul, that the immediate conſequence of a pious man's departure hence is *being with Chriſt* ‡.

But were the reaſons of his *deſcending into hades*, or of the inſertion of it into our belief, ever ſo obſcure; it may ſuffice us, that the reaſons of his ſufferings and death are very plain, as well as very important. With theſe therefore I ſhall conclude this lecture.

1. The firſt is, that he might be an example to his followers. For ſo he became the nobleſt and moſt engaging pattern imaginable of that great and hard duty, patient ſubmiſſion to the will of God: ſince being of a rank infinitely ſuperior to the afflictions of this world, and having done nothing to deſerve the leaſt of them, he moſt willingly choſe, and cheerfully bore the moſt grievous that were poſſible. Well then may we, mortals and ſinners, take whatever befalls us, in life or in death, meekly and contentedly; "becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, leaving us an example, that we ſhould follow his ſteps: who did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth, who, yet, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatened not; but committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly §. The example alſo of kindneſs and love to men he ſhowed yet more fully by his crucifixion, than by his incarnation: foreſeeing, as he plainly did, all the pains and torments he ſhould undergo, in executing his great deſign of reforming and ſaving mankind; yet deterred by nothing from undertaking it, and perſevering in it. "If therefore he ſo loved us, we ought alſo," as St John argues, to love one another ‖: and "becauſe he laid down his life for us, we ought,

* Heb. xii. 23. † John viii. 56. ‡ Phil. i. 23. See Peters on Job, § 1. p. 399. § 1 Pet. ii. 23. ‖ 1 John iv. 11.

ought," if a proper occaſion require it, even "to lay down our lives for the brethren *."

2. A ſecond reaſon of his dying was, that he might thus confirm the truth of his Doctrine: to which it muſt needs add a very powerful confirmation, that, though the Jews expected a warlike and victorious Meſſiah, and therefore his taking upon himſelf a meek and ſuffering character muſt grievouſly prejudice them againſt him; yet he declared from the very firſt, what you read in St John, that *as Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, ſo ſhould the Son of Man be lifted up* †; ſignifying, as the ſame Evangeliſt elſewhere aſſures us, *what death he ſhould die* ‡. And he all along perſiſted in this declaration; rejected every opportunity of worldly power; fearleſsly taught the moſt provoking truths, and voluntarily met what he foretold he ſhould ſuffer. Stronger evidences of ſincerity, than theſe, a man cannot give; and therefore St John thus reckons up the teſtimonies to Chriſt's miſſion: *There are three that bear witneſs on earth; the Spirit, the Water and the Blood* §. And St Paul obſerves, that *before Pontius Pilate he witneſſed a good confeſſion* ‖; on account of which he is called in the book of Revelation, *the faithful Witneſs*, or martyr ¶.

3. The third, and principal reaſon of our Saviour's death was, *to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf* **, that *being juſtified by his blood, we may be ſaved from wrath, and reconciled to God* ††. But as I cannot now enlarge on this doctrine ſuitably to its importance; and the article of *the forgiveneſs of ſins* will be a proper place to treat of it; I ſhall only add at preſent, that *God hath made him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him* ‡‡. *For if one died for all, then were all dead: and he died for all, that they which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him, which died for them, and roſe again* §§. This we ſhould do with great dutifulneſs; for *we are not our own, we are bought with a price* |||: and with great thankfulneſs; for he hath *delivered us from the bondage*

* 1 John iii. 16. † John iii. 14. ‡ John xii. 32, 33. xviii. 32.
§ 1 John v. 8. ‖ 1 Tim. vi. 13. ¶ Rev. i. 5.
** Heb. ix. 26. †† Rom. v. 9, 10. ‡‡ 2 Cor. v. 21.
§§ Ibid. 14, 15. ||| 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God *. Unto him therefore, *that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, unto him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen* †.

* Rom. viii. 21. † Rev. i. 5, 6.

LECTURE X.

CREED.

Article V.—*The third day he rose again from the dead.*

HAVING carried on the history of our Saviour to the lowest act of his humiliation, our Creed sets forth, in the next place, how God was pleased to exalt him for undergoing it. And the first part of this brighter view of things, was his resurrection: that is, the restoring of his body to a condition of performing the several functions of life, as before; and the reunion of his soul to it. In discoursing of which, I shall speak, first, Concerning the reality of his rising again: Secondly, The circumstances: Thirdly, The uses of it.

I. The reality; which depends on two things; that he was really dead, and that he was really alive afterwards.

As for the former: the whole of the history shows it fully, nor did any of his opposers ever call it in question. His crucifixion was public, at noon-day, before a great multitude. The Jews who procured it, the Romans who executed it, would both take care, that it was done effectually. And the piercing

piercing of his ſide with a ſpear, which, by the blood and water that followed, plainly appeared to reach his heart, as it muſt have produced ſome ſigns of life, had there been any remaining; muſt alſo have deſtroyed, in a few moments, all that could remain. Then, after this, we find him treated as dead, both by friends and enemies; Pilate, after a particular inquiry into that very matter, granting his body to be buried; one of his diſciples embalming him with ſpices, another laying him in his own ſepulchre; the Jews making no objection; but fully ſatisfied of his death, and only careful to guard againſt any pretence of a reſurrection.

But that, notwithſtanding, he was afterwards really alive again, which is the other point, we have multiplicity of evidence of the ſtrongeſt kinds. The ſepulchre was newly hewn out of a rock, ſhut up with a very large ſtone rolled to the mouth of it, and guarded night and day by a band of ſoldiers; who were to watch till the time was over, within which he had ſaid he ſhould riſe. Yet, on that very day, the ſepulchre was found open, and the body was gone. Now by what means could this come to paſs? To his diſciples it could be of no poſſible uſe, to carry on a deceit, by getting his corpſe into their poſſeſſion. For if they had ſucceeded ſo ill with their Maſter at their head, what could they expect by carrying on the ſame ſcheme after they had loſt him, but to come to the ſame end? And what in all reaſon had they to do, but get quietly out of the way, at leaſt till the matter was a little forgotten? Indeed we find in fact, that, far from being enterpriſing, they were ſo diſheartened, even when he was firſt ſeized, that they all forſook him: and there was little likelihood, that they ſhould have more courage to attempt any thing, juſt after he was executed. Or if they had, what manner of chance was there, that when a band of ſixty men uſed to military diſcipline, were ſet to watch the grave, they ſhould either find them all aſleep at once, though it was death to be ſo, and not wake one of them; or be able to convey the body away from them, though they were awake? Evidently they muſt have failed, and probably have been ſeized, in the attempt. Or could they have carried their point; yet, by the reſiſtance made to them, it muſt have appeared, how unfairly they had carried it: and all hope of getting a reſurrection believed muſt

have

have been utterly at an end. Since then the body was not found, and could not, by any human means, or indeed for any rational purpoſe, have been carried away; it muſt have been raiſed by the power of God, as the goſpels relate it was.

But to give a full and ſenſible demonſtration of it, *he ſhewed himſelf alive* to his diſciples, *after his paſſion, by many infallible proofs, being ſeen of them forty days* *. Now, in this they could be no more miſtaken, than you can in ſeeing and hearing me, and knowing me to be alive at this time. As they had almoſt deſpaired of his riſing again, they were but too backward to believe it: and indeed they would believe it on no other teſtimony, than that of their own eyes and ears; and Thomas even not without touching him, and putting his hands on the marks of his wounds: which the reſt, as well as he, when they were *terrified, and ſuppoſed they had ſeen a ſpirit*, and not their Lord, were invited to do. *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myſelf: handle me and ſee; for a ſpirit hath not fleſh and bones, as ye ſee me have* †.

They could not, after ſuch trials, be deceived in ſo plain a matter. And if it be imagined, that they might intend to deceive others; conſider: They began their teſtimony to his reſurrection, at the very time, and the very place, where they affirmed this fact to have happened: Their adverſaries had all the power of the place in their hands; and all the advantages, that men could wiſh, for detecting the fraud, if it was one; and they were in the ſtrongeſt manner intereſted and concerned to make uſe of them. Is it poſſible now, that men ſo timorous, as the diſciples plainly were juſt before, ſhould, immediately after, venture, without need, to bring the juſt reſentment of both magiſtrates and people upon themſelves, by aſſerting ſo ſtrange an event, if it was not true? Yet they did aſſert it: and far from being diſproved in it, thouſands at once, notwithſtanding the moſt powerful worldly motives, and the deepeſt rooted prejudices, to the contrary, were convinced by them. And thus they went on, through many years, to the end of their days, all of them ſuffering patiently and joyfully, for the ſake of this teſtimony, every thing that could be terrible in life, and at length death itſelf: nor is it pretended,

* Acts i. 3. † Luke xxiv. 37, 39.

that any one of them either retracted at any time what he had ſaid, or behaved in any reſpect ſo as to weaken the credit of it. On the contrary, they were uncommonly pious and virtuous, as well as bold and unwearied: and, to complete the ſtrength of their evidence, they not only taught, illiterate as they were, a doctrine more worthy of God, than the wiſeſt of men had known before, profeſſing to have received it from their Maſter's mouth; but they confirmed the whole by vaſt numbers of miracles, which he enabled them, and they enabled their followers, to perform, both during that age and the next.

This is briefly the proof of our Saviour's reſurrection. And if this be ſufficient proof; then it is no objection, that more than ſufficient was not given: for inſtance, that he did not appear to the rulers and whole people. They had no way deſerved it. He was no way bound to it. Nor doth God, in any caſe, give men juſt ſuch evidence, as they pleaſe; but ſuch as he knows to be enough for honeſt minds: and if others will not believe without more, they muſt take the conſequences. Chriſt appeared to the twelve apoſtles often: to 500 perſons at once, beſides. If this number be thought too ſmall, when was ever the tenth part of it required in any other matter? And if Chriſt was to appear to all the Jews, why not to all the Gentiles? Why not to all us at this day? We have no proof, that any one, who deſired it, was refuſed ſeeing him. Poſſibly many, certainly St Paul, were converted by ſeeing him. Some perhaps nothing would have convinced: others would not have owned their conviction. This would have made ſtrange confuſion. And had the whole nation been convinced, their notions of the Meſſiah's temporal kingdom would probably have thrown them at the ſame time into a rebellion againſt the Romans; or however, the ſuſpicions of the Romans would have driven them into one; and then the goſpel would have been thought a mere political artifice, to ſerve a favourite purpoſe. Nay, had they continued quiet, and the Romans let them alone; even then we ſhould have loſt that evidence for the truth of our religion, which ariſes from the perſecutions, undergone by the firſt teachers of it: from the very advantageous circumſtances, that the Jews our adverſaries have been the keepers of thoſe prophecies, which prove Chriſt to be come: and alſo from their wonderful diſperſion and preſervation: beſides the proof which will

ariſe,

riſe, in God's good time, from their converſion to Chriſtianity.

II. Thus much for the reality of Chriſt's reſurrection. The circumſtances of it, which was the ſecond head propoſed, it is beſt that you ſhould read in the New Teſtament, where they are told at large. And if the accounts, which the ſeveral evangeliſt's give, ſhould ſeem not eaſy to be reconciled in ſome particulars; you will recollect, that nothing is more common in all hiſtorians, than for one to omit what another relates; to tell but part of what another tells more fully; to join cloſe together in writing, what happened at ſome diſtance of time in fact; and to neglect a trifling exactneſs in points that are not material. And the Spirit of God, which directed the goſpel hiſtorians, might with great wiſdom permit them to do thus: it being a ſtrong proof to every conſiderate mind, that they did not contrive together what ſtory they ſhould tell; but that each related, fairly and artleſsly, what he ſaw and heard at the time, and recollected afterwards, concerning this great fact: of which the more abſolutely certain they were in general, the leſs they would think of being accurate in every little part; and of drawing up a methodical, and minute, and ſcrupulouſly ſtrict narration of the whole that had paſſed.

But there is one circumſtance, which requires to be conſidered more diſtinctly; that of the time. The almoſt conſtant expreſſion of ſcripture concerning this is the ſame with that of the Creed, that *he roſe again the third day:* reckoning the day of his death for the firſt; the day, which he continued dead, for the ſecond; the day of his reſurrection for the third. And this is the common way of computing every where. Thus the Jews computed the eighth day, on which their children were to be circumciſed. Thus alſo the phyſicians call that a Tertian, or third day ague, in which there is but one day wholly free from it. And thus men reckon in all caſes. Sometimes the expreſſion in ſcripture is, that *he ſhould riſe after three days:* meaning, not after the third day was ended, but after it was begun. Juſt as when Rehoboam had ſaid unto the people, *Come again unto me after three days*, it follows, *So all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king bade, ſaying, Come again to me on the third day**. And in one ſingle place of

* 2 Chron. x. 5, 12. See Whitby on Mark viii. 31.

the New Teſtament it is ſaid, *the Son of Man ſhould be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights* *. But this without doubt was intended to be underſtood conformably to the reſt: as it well may. For a day and night in the Jewiſh language is no more, than what we commonly call a day in ours. Hence we find in the book of Eſther, that when ſhe had appointed the Jews to faſt for her good ſucceſs, *neither eating nor drinking three days, night nor day*; that is, to faſt three days and three nights; and, after that, ſhe *would go in to the king* to petition for them; the very next words, notwithſtanding, are, that *on the third day ſhe put on her royal apparel*, and went into the king's preſence †. Again, when we read, that Elijah went 40 days and 40 nights to Horeb the Mount of God, (1 Kings xix. 8.) we have no cauſe to think the meaning is, that he travelled inceſſantly night and day; for ſo his journey muſt have been much ſooner ended: but that he employed in it ſuch a part of every day, during all that time, as he was conveniently able. This way of ſpeaking may ſeem ſtrange to us: but the Jews underſtand it ſo well, that not a man of them, excepting a very weak one of late date ‡, hath ever pretended to raiſe an objection from this paſſage, though very ſlight pretences will ſerve their turn §. Thus then our Saviour, dying on Friday, and riſing on Sunday, was dead three days, and yet roſe the third: which was a ſufficient ſpace of time to prove him really dead; but not ſufficient, either for him to ſee corruption, or for his enemies to leave off watching his grave, or for his diſciples to deſpair abſolutely and totally: and therefore no fitter time could have been fixed.

III. The third point to be conſidered is, The uſes of the reſurrection of Chriſt; which are great and many.

In general, it appears plainly from hence, that he really came from God; and that therefore whatever he hath affirmed, promiſed, or threatened, will be found true. For there can poſſibly be

* Mat. xii. 40. † Eſth. iv. 16. v. 1. See Whitby on Mat. xii. 40.

‡ Nizzachon vet. in Wagenſeil, p. 236. who objects, that at moſt it could be but three days and two nights.

§ Concerning this whole matter, ſee Reland. Ant. 4. 1. 21.

be no ſtronger proof of his Divine Miſſion, than, when he had been openly put to death as a deceiver, for God to reverſe the ſentence in ſo extraordinary a manner, as reſtoring him to life again. This was the great evidence, to which he had before his death appealed. No one either did, or could, object againſt it, as not being a deciſive one. And therefore on its coming to paſs, as he had foretold it would, he is juſtly ſaid by the Apoſtle to be *declared the Son of God with power, by the reſurrection from the dead* *. But there are two things proved by it more particularly.

1. That his ſufferings are accepted by our heavenly Father, as a full atonement for the ſins of men. For ſince God hath looſed the bands of the grave, with which he was holden on our account; it is manifeſt, that he hath completed the ſatisfaction owing from us; that he hath "through death deſtroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and delivered thoſe, who through fear of it, were all their lifetime ſubject to bondage †." If then we do, by faith and repentance, qualify ourſelves to receive the pardon, that he is authorized to give; we may boldly ſay, with the Apoſtle, "Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that juſtifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died; yea, rather that is riſen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who maketh interceſſion for us ‡."

2. From our Saviour's reſurrection appears the certainty of our own. The promiſe, which he made, was, that "every one who believed on him ſhould have everlaſting life, and he would raiſe him at the laſt day §:" and to ſhow the truth of it, he raiſed up himſelf from the death, which he had ſuffered for the ſins of men. This is a proof, clear and ſtrong beyond all exception or cavil. Since Chriſt is riſen, our reſurrection is poſſible: and ſince Chriſt hath promiſed, it is certain. "If then we believe Jeſus died, and roſe again," we muſt believe too, as St Paul juſtly argues, that "them alſo, which ſleep in Jeſus, will God bring with him. For the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt; and they which are alive and remain, ſhall be caught up together with them in the clouds, and ſo ſhall we be

* Rom. i. 4. † Heb. ii. 14, 15. ‡ Rom. viii. 33, 34. § John vi. 40.

be ever with the Lord *." "Bleſſed therefore be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled; that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for us †." And may "the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlaſting Covenant make us perfect in every good work, to do his will; working in us that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt: to whom be glory, for ever and ever. Amen ‡."

* 1 Theſſ. iv. 14, 16, 17. † 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. ‡ Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

LECTURE XI.

CREED.

Article VI.—*He aſcended into heaven, and ſitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty.*

THE firſt care of our bleſſed Lord, in conſequence o his Reſurrection, was to ſatisfy his diſciples fully of the truth of it: the next, to fit them for inſtructing mankind in his religion, of which it was one principal doctrine and evidence. "He therefore ſhowed himſelf alive to them, after his paſſion, by many infallible proofs; being ſeen of them forty days; and ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God *." This being done, as he had now gone thro' the whole of his work on earth; it was proper, that he ſhould return to that happy place, from whence his compaſſion to a loſt

* Acts i. 3.

loſt world had brought him down: according to the words of his own prayer; "Father, the hour is come; I have glorified thee on earth: I have finiſhed the work, which thou gaveſt me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory, which I had with thee, before the world was*:" There did not remain any further reaſon for his appearance perſonally amongſt men; till he ſhould "come again to judge the quick and the dead." Many ages were to paſs "before that great and terrible day of the Lord†." It was fit therefore, that, as St Peter ſpeaks, "the Heaven ſhould receive him, until the times of the reſtitution of all things‡."

And, though the redemption of mankind was completed by him, ſo far as, in this lower world, it could be; yet there was left an important part of it, to be accompliſhed above. The Jewiſh diſpenſation, as the epiſtle to the Hebrews more eſpecially informs us, was "a ſhadow of things to come§." As therefore, under this, the great Sacrifice of Atonement was yearly ſlain without the ſanctuary firſt; and then the High Prieſt entered alone with the blood of it, into the moſt holy place; there to offer it before the Lord, and atone for the ſins of the people: ſo, in the goſpel age, was our bleſſed Saviour, firſt as *the Lamb of God*‖, to be ſacrificed for our ſins on earth; and then, as the *High Prieſt of our profeſſion*¶, to *enter, with his own blood, into* heaven; *the true holy place*, of which the other was *a figure*, there *to appear* with it, *in the preſence of God for us**: and thus, having *offered one Sacrifice for ſins*, he was *for ever to ſit down on the right hand of God*†.

When the time therefore was come, for this purpoſe of Divine Wiſdom to take effect; having gradually prepared the minds of his apoſtles to bear his departure, he, in the laſt place, with his uſual tenderneſs, gave them all a ſolemn bleſſing: the words of which indeed are not delivered down to us; but probably they might not be unlike, and certainly they could not well be more affectionate, than thoſe, which we find he uſed for their conſolation, even before his ſufferings, on a more diſtant proſpect of his being taken from them. "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God; believe alſo in me. I go to prepare a place for you; and I will come again, and

* John xvii. 4, 5 † Joel ii. 31. ‡ Acts iii. 21. § Heb x. 1.
‖ John i. 29. ¶ Heb. iii. 1. * Heb. ix. 12, 24. † Heb. x. 12.

and receive you unto myſelf; that where I am, there ye may be alſo. Whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in my name, that will I do. And I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter: that he may abide with you for ever. Peace I leave with you: my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid *." "It is expedient for you, that I go away. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: But if I depart, I will ſend him unto you, and your heart ſhall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. Theſe things I have ſpoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye ſhall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world †."

Undoubtedly with ſuch like words of grace and affection, which every good Chriſtian may and ought to conſider as ſpoken to himſelf, did our Lord, before his departure, comfort his diſciples under the immediate view of that intereſting event. "And it came to paſs," the Evangeliſts informs us, "that as he was yet bleſſing them, while they beheld, he was taken up: and a cloud received him out of their ſight ‡."

It is hardly poſſible to conceive ſtronger or more various emotions of mind, than thoſe, with which the breaſt of every one of his followers muſt be filled, on this occaſion: of ſurpriſe and aſtoniſhment at what they had ſeen; of gratitude and tenderneſs, in return to what they had heard; of grief and fear concerning their now ſolitary condition; yet mixed, at the ſame time, with ſubmiſſion and hope, and faithful truſt in their dear Lord. But, as he himſelf had told them, "If they loved him, they would rejoice, becauſe he went unto the Father §;" ſo in fact, amidſt all the paſſions working within them, this prevailed above the reſt; and triumphant gladneſs of heart was the feeling, that took poſſeſſion, and dwelt with them. "They worſhipped him, and returned to Jeruſalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praiſing and bleſſing God ‖."

Let us then rejoice alſo in this glorious exaltation of Chriſt our Head. Let us conſider the opportunity it gives us of exerciſing that *faith* in him, which the apoſtle juſtly calls "the

* John xiv. 1, 2, 3, 13, 16, 27. † John xvi. 7, 22, 33.
‡ Luke xxiv. 51. Acts i. 9. § John xiv. 28. ‖ Luke xxiv. 52.

evidence of things not ſeen *;" and of obtaining a reward, ſuitable to the greater virtue and piety that we ſhow, in conducting aright our underſtandings, our hearts and our lives, under a lower, and yet ſufficient, degree of evidence for our holy religion. "Becauſe thou haſt ſeen me," ſaith he himſelf to St Thomas, "thou haſt believed: bleſſed are they, that have not ſeen, and yet have believed †." This bleſſedneſs therefore, by his aſcenſion, he hath left to his whole church the means of acquiring; "that the trial of your faith," as St Peter expreſſes it, "may be found unto praiſe and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt: whom not having ſeen, ye love; and in whom, though now ye ſee him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, the ſalvation of your ſouls ‡." Let us conſider too, that if his abſence tries our faith, the manner of his going away powerfully confirms it. For the apoſtles were eye-witneſſes of his aſcending into the clouds: and what ſtronger proof need we, of his coming from God, than his being thus taken up to him again; according to his own repeated predictions; beſides the remarkable, though obſcurer, intimations of the ſame thing in the Old Teſtament?

Nor let it ſeem ſtrange, that the ſcripture ſhould ſpeak of one eſpecial place, as the peculiar and appropriated reſidence of God. We acknowledge, that he is, and cannot but be, every where. "Heaven and earth are full of the majeſty of his glory §:" yea, "the Heaven and Heaven of heavens cannot contain him ‖." "Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence? If I aſcend up into heaven, thou art there: If I go down to hell, thou art there alſo. If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermoſt parts of the ſea; even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me ¶." Yet, notwithſtanding this, the ſcripture conſtantly mentions him, as having condeſcended to eſtabliſh his throne in one particular place; and exhibit himſelf there, in the ſymbol of light inacceſſible: where therefore his holy angels attend upon him, and ſee his face; from whence he iſſues forth his commands, as princes do theirs from the royal palace; and is repreſented, as viewing

* Heb. xi. 1. † John xx. 29. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 7, 8, 9. § Te Deum.
‖ 1 Kings viii. 27. ¶ Pſal. cxxxix. 7,—10.

ing and obſerving the actions of his creatures; and pouring down bleſſing or vengeance, as their behaviour requires. "The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's ſeat is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men *." Here it is, that "thouſand thouſands miniſter unto him; and ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtand before him †," celebrating his praiſes, and rejoicing in the light of his countenance. For "in his preſence is the fulneſs of joy, and at his right hand there are pleaſures for evermore ‡."

Into this bleſſed place then did our Saviour aſcend: and there, as the Creed, in conformity with ſcripture, teaches, "ſat down at the right hand of the Father." Not that God who is an infinite Spirit, and by the word of his power doth whatever he pleaſes, both in heaven and earth; either hath, or needs, bodily members, for inſtruments of perception or action, like our imperfect nature. But theſe things are figuratively aſcribed to him, in condeſcenſion to human capacities. And the meaning of ſuch figures is eaſily underſtood. He is the King of the whole world. Now into a king's immediate preſence not all perſons are uſually admitted. And of thoſe who are, not all poſſeſs the ſame rank and degree of nearneſs to him: but every one ſuch as he pleaſes to appoint. Now the higheſt mark of dignity, which the eaſtern monarchs conferred on the perſon, whom they eſteemed and favoured moſt, was placing him, on occaſions of ſolemnity, at their right hand; the ſecond in honour was next to the royal perſon, on the other ſide; and the reſt of the court ſucceeded in the ſame order. Thus, when the mother of King Solomon came to petition for Adonijah, the ſcripture informs us, "he ſat down on the throne, and cauſed a ſeat to be ſet for her, and ſhe ſat on his right hand §." And when the ſons of Zebedee had, by miſtake, imagined the kingdom of our Saviour to be like one of this world, their petition was, "that they might ſit, one on his right hand, the other on his left, in his kingdom ‖." Sometimes the poſture of ſtanding is mentioned. as Pſal. xlv. 9. "on thy right hand did ſtand the Queen in gold of Ophir." And, when the Court of Heaven, attending on their Sovereign, is deſcribed; "I ſaw," ſaith the prophet, "the Lord ſitting on

* Pſal. xi. 4. † Dan. vii. 10. ‡ Pſal. xvi. 12. § 1 Kin. ii. 19.
‖ Matth. xx. 21.

on his throne; and all the hoſt of heaven above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come *;" "that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth †:" "And he muſt reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet ‡." Sitting at God's right hand, implies this pre-eminence; "for to which of the angels ſaid God at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footſtool §?"

Indeed "all power, both in heaven and earth, was given to" ‖ our Saviour before his aſcenſion: but not, till afterwards, was his title to it publicly recognized, and poſſeſſion of it ſolemnly taken by him: which, in other words, "is ſitting down at the right hand of God."

But let us conſider, not only the nature of our Saviour's exaltation; but, what principally concerns us, the benefits of it to mankind, which are three: His ſending the Holy Spirit to abide for ever with his church: His interceding for it with the Father: His powerful protection of it againſt its enemies.

1. His ſending the Holy Spirit. This was reſerved, with great wiſdom, till after his aſcenſion; both becauſe it was then moſt needed, to comfort his diſciples under the loſs of his perſonal preſence; and alſo, becauſe it afforded a new evidence of his Divine power, that, far from being in a worſe condition by his departure, they were endued with higher degrees of miraculous gifts, than ever they had been before. St John therefore, upon our Saviour's promiſing the Spirit to them who ſhould believe on him, obſerves, that "the Spirit was not yet given, becauſe Jeſus was not yet glorified ¶." And St Peter, on the day when it was beſtowed, ſaith, "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhed forth this, which ye now ſee and hear **." The miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghoſt indeed, being no longer neceſſary, ceaſed many ages ago: but his ſanctifying graces, a much more important bleſſing, which we ſhall always need, continue ſtill;

* Eph. i. 20, 21. † Phil. ii. 10. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 25. § Heb. i. 13.
‖ Mat. xxviii. 18. ¶ John vii. 39. ** Acts ii. 33.

and conſtitute his preſent ſhare in the work of our redemption: agreeably to the aſſurance, which our bleſſed Lord gave, of *another Comforter to abide with us, and dwell in us for ever* *.

2. His Interceſſion with the Father. For his oblation of himſelf being accepted, as the foundation of a new covenant of mercy and favour; we have now an Advocate in heaven, ſure, to prevail: *an High Prieſt, that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having been tempted in all points as we are* †, ever appearing for us in the preſence of God; and efficaciouſly pleading the pardon, which he hath purchaſed, for all who repent of and forſake their ſins. *Who then is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died; yea rather, that is riſen again; who is even at the right hand of God; who alſo maketh interceſſion for us* ‡.

3. His Protection of his Church againſt all its enemies, ſpiritual and temporal. The attempts of the former he defeats by the above-mentioned methods, the influences of his Spirit to preſerve us from ſin, and the efficacy of his interceſſion to procure us pardon on moſt equitable terms, whenever we fall into it. As for the latter: Upon the firſt oppoſers of his church, the Jewiſh and Roman perſecutors, his vindictive power hath been moſt remarkably exerciſed: and the ſucceeding adverſaries of religion, in every age, have ſerved, and ſhall ſerve, only for a trial of *the faith and patience of the ſaints* §: generally, without prevailing to their harm even here; and always being ſubſervient to their happineſs hereafter: till at length the appointed time ſhall come, when *the kingdoms of this world ſhall become the kingdoms of the Lord and his Chriſt* ‖: and having reigned on this earth, till its period arrives, he ſhall reſign up to God his kingdom of grace, its end being accompliſhed; and reign over his ſaints, in that of glory, for ever and ever: fully performing that invaluable promiſe, *To him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me on my throne; even as I alſo overcame, and am ſet down with my Father in his throne* ¶.

Theſe things being ſo, inſtead of amuſing ourſelves with the ſpeculative conſideration of his aſcenſion, and the reaſons of it; we ſhould learn from his departure to prepare for his return.

* John xiv. 16, 17. † Heb. iv. 15. ‡ Rom. viii. 34.
Rev. xiii. 13. ‖ Rev. xi. 15. ¶ Rev. iii. 21.

return. To this was the attention of thoſe, who ſaw it, directed by the angels. *Ye men of Galilee, why ſtand ye gazing up into heaven? This ſame Jeſus, which is taken up from you, ſhall ſo come, in like manner as ye have ſeen him go into heaven* *. The preſent article of our Creed is, that he *ſitteth at the right hand of God*. The next is, *that from thence he ſhall come to judge the quick and the dead*. And what ſhould this very cloſe connection teach us, but that we all be careful to behave in ſuch manner, that we may be ready to *meet our Lord* † at his coming, and *enter* with him *into his joy* ‡? He hath deſcended upon earth to procure us a right to future happineſs; and inſtruct us, how to obtain it: he is now aſcended up into heaven, *to prepare a place for us* §: there ſeated in glory, he invites us to him. What then remains, but that we fix *our hearts where our treaſure is* ‖; and "ſet our affections on thoſe that are above, where Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of God ¶?" But in vain do we rejoice in a glorified Saviour, unleſs we become "his friends, by doing what he commands us *:" in vain do we lift up our eyes and our wiſhes to his happy abode; unleſs, by reſembling him now in purity and holineſs, we qualify ourſelves to partake hereafter the reſemblance of his glory. "Who ſhall aſcend into the hill of the Lord? or who ſhall ſtand in his holy place? even he that leadeth an uncorrupt life, and doth the thing which is right, and ſpeaketh the truth from his heart. He that hath uſed no deceit in his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbour, and hath not ſlandered his neighbour. He that ſetteth not by himſelf: but is lowly in his own eyes. In whoſe eyes a vile perſon is contemned: but he honoureth them, that fear the Lord. He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, and hath not lift up his ſoul unto vanity. He ſhall receive the bleſſing from the Lord, and righteouſneſs from the God of his ſalvation †."

* Acts i. 11. † 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. ‡ Mat. xxv. 21. § John xiv. 2.
‖ Mat. vi. 21. ¶ Col. iii. 1. * John xv. 14. † Pſal. xv. and xxiv.

LEC-

LECTURE XII.

CREED.

Article VII.—*From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

THIS is the great and awful doctrine, which makes all the preceding ones so important to us: that "God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that Man, whom he hath ordained *:" a truth, the belief of which infinitely concerns every one of us to settle well in our souls, and be duly affected by it.

The reason of our minds, and even the feelings of our hearts, give us very strong grounds to be persuaded of a future judgement, had we no further evidence. We are all of us by nature, capable of perceiving, what is just and right for us to do, and what is otherwise: we are all capable of acting according to this perception: we all see, it is fit we should; and fit we should suffer for it, if we do not. When we behave according to our duty, there springs up a delightful peace and serenity within our breasts: when we knowingly transgress it, we not only disapprove and accuse ourselves, whether we will or not, but experience a foreboding expectation of just recompence. "For wickedness, condemned by her own witness, is very timorous: and, being pressed with conscience, always forecasteth grievous things †." Nor do these horrors relate only, or chiefly, to what we have deserved to suffer in this world: but when our share in it draws to an end, and death approaches, then our fears grow stronger than ever, concerning somewhat, which is yet to come ‡. And thus are all men "a law unto themselves; and shew the work of the law

* Acts xvii. 31. † Wisd. xvii. 11.

† Επειδαν τις εγγυς η τȣ οιεσθαι τελευτησειν, εισηρχηται αυτω φοβος και φροντις περι ων εν τω προσθεν ȣκ εισηει. Plat. de Rep. l. 1.

law written in their hearts, their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs *."

That ſome perſons are able to overwhelm theſe apprehenſions under buſineſs and purſuits, to drown them in debauchery and intemperance, to divert them by pleaſures and amuſements, to ſet up little cavils againſt them, and even affect to ridicule them; is no objection in the leaſt to their being juſt, and well grounded. The feeling is plainly natural: every one of theſe methods to get rid of it, is plainly a force upon nature. Often it returns with double terror, for having been unjuſtly driven away: and ſeldom, or never, can the moſt thoughtleſs, or moſt hardened perſon, loſe intirely thoſe fears, which are ſeated in the very bottom of our ſouls; and which if we could loſe, we ſhould only be the more ſurely miſerable: for ſtill the foundation of them would remain unſhaken.

Still it would be true, that there is a God, who made us, and is at all times intimately preſent with us: who therefore with unſpeakably more eaſe perceives all that paſſes in our very hearts, than we do one another's outward actions: who being perfect in knowledge, diſtinguiſhes, in every caſe, what is good from what is evil; and being perfect in holineſs, approves the one, and abhors the other. Even we are thus affected in ſome degree: and his infinite purity muſt therefore be infinitely more ſo. Now, what he hates, he can puniſh as he pleaſes; and reward what he loves: for all power is in his hands; all nature depends on the word of his mouth; and he is "the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever †."

Think then: Will the righteous and holy King of the whole earth, when he hath planted his laws in our whole hearts, when he hath made us for the very purpoſe of obeying them, when he hath filled us with ſo deep a ſenſe of what will follow, if we diſobey them; ſuffer us, after this, to deſpiſe and diſhonour him, to injure his creatures, abuſe ourſelves, and diſappoint the great deſign of forming us; and yet take no notice? Doth he govern the world, to the very leaſt parts of it, with ſo much wiſdom and care, in every other reſpect; and will he be ſo unwiſe and negligent, as to overlook the one thing, that deſerves his attention above all; and make no diſtinction

* Rom. ii. 15. † Heb. xiii. 8.

ſtinction "between him that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not*?" It cannot be: and the conſcience of every one of you, at this moment, tells you it cannot.

If then ſuch a diſtinction will be made, when and where will it be made? Here, in this world, it plainly is not done, to a degree that the Almighty Governor of it can poſſibly think ſufficient. Perpetually we ſee "juſt men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked: and wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous †." Amidſt all this diſorder, there are indeed evident marks of a providence: but of a providence, that gives only ſpecimens and earneſts of its juſtice at preſent; reſerving the full vindication and diſplay of itſelf for that future ſtate, in which our ſouls, being naturally immortal, are evidently deſtined to exiſt; and where all men ſhall receive according to their works. This is the great end, that God had in his view, when he created us: and it is the principal point, that we ſhould have in our own view, through the whole of our lives.

More or leſs all mankind, even in their darkeſt ignorance, have always had ſome perſuaſion of a future recompence: which, however mixed with errors, yet, being thus univerſal and laſting, muſt have been grounded in nature and truth. And the wiſer and better any perſons were, amongſt the heathens, the ſtronger and more rational belief they had of this doctrine: which yet was not owing merely to their wiſhes, and their hopes: for the worſt of ſinners, that were the faſtheſt from deſiring a juſt reward hereafter, feared it, whether they would or not. Thus we find it recorded of a very wicked Heathen, that when "Paul reaſoned of righteouſneſs and temperance, and judgement to come, Felix trembled ‡."

But ſtill, while the evidence of this great article conſiſted wholly in mere human reaſonings, about a matter, that was out of ſight: bad perſons, though they could not help at ſome times believing enough to fright them; yet made a ſhift at others to diſbelieve enough, to make them tolerably eaſy in doing wrong: and good perſons, though they might have hope ſufficient to influence them in common caſes; yet often had not

* Mal. iii. 18. † Eccl. viii. 14. ‡ Acts xxiv. 25.

not ſufficient to ſupport them under harder duties, and heavier afflictions, than ordinary. Even the obſcurer confirmations of this doctrine in the Old Teſtament therefore, were a great benefit to thoſe who partook of them: and as they had no right to any ſuch aſſurances of it; they had no cauſe to complain, that they were not clearer. But we have infinite cauſe to be thankful who are favoured in the goſpel with the fulleſt and ſtrongeſt atteſtation to this moſt intereſting of all our concerns. Chriſtians, unleſs they renounce their Chriſtianity, cannot diſbelieve a future judgment. The only difficulty is, to be influenced by our belief, as we ought. And in that alſo the ſcripture hath given us the beſt help, which is poſſible to be given; by its affecting accounts of the ſeveral particulars, that relate to this awful tranſaction: the perſons on whom, the perſon by whom, the time when, the things for which, and the manner in which, the final ſentence of happineſs or miſery is to be pronounced. Theſe points therefore I ſhall now endeavour to place before you diſtinctly. And,

1. The perſons, on whom, are, *the quick*, that is the living, *and the dead*. All that have died before, in every age of the world, ſhall be reſtored to life: and all that remain alive, ſhall be joined with them to receive their doom; nor ſhall any exception be made. For we are expreſsly aſſured, that *the dead, ſmall and great, ſhall ſtand before God* *. The very higheſt therefore ſhall not eſcape by their power, the richeſt by their wealth, the wiſeſt by their abilities or artfulneſs: nor, on the other hand, ſhall the meaneſt wretch be looked on, as too inconſiderable for God's notice; or the moſt ignorant be exempted from anſwering for the care, which he hath taken, to get the knowledge, that he might; and to uſe the knowledge, that he had of his duty. Whatever our ſtation be, we are bound alike to behave in it, as well as we can: and how far we have done ſo, and how far we have failed of it, is the one inquiry, that our Judge will make. Other diſtinctions, how conſiderable ſo ever they appear in our eyes, to him are as nothing. All creatures are equally beneath his infinite Majeſty; but none are either beneath or above his inſpection now, or his ſentence hereafter. Here then we are put, every one of us, on a fair trial, without any diſadvantage or inequality whatever. Both the moſt honourable, and the moſt

* Rev. xx. 12.

contemptible perſons, as to worldly circumſtances, may be either the happieſt or the moſt miſerable in the next life, juſt as they ſhall chuſe. Let thoſe of high degree therefore be humble, thoſe of low be content, and all be watchful over themſelves.

2. The perſon, by whom the ſentence ſhall be paſſed, is Jeſus Chriſt. *For the Father* himſelf *judgeth no man: but hath committed all judgment to the Son, and given him authority to execute it, becauſe he is the Son of Man* *: becauſe he is the perſon, deſcribed by that name in the Prophet Daniel, before whom *the judgement was* to be *ſet, and the books opened* †: who alſo is no leſs peculiarly qualified, than expreſsly appointed for it; ſince in him Divine Perfection is joined with experience of human infirmity. So that being judged by one, who *was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without ſin* ‡; we may be ſure, that every due allowance will be made to our natural weakneſs, and no undue one to our wilful wickedneſs. Unleſs therefore we repent and amend, he, that came the firſt time to ſave us, will come the ſecond to condemn us; and the meek and merciful Jeſus appear clothed with ſuch terror, that we ſhall *ſay to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand* §?

3. The time, when theſe things ſhall be, himſelf informs us, *it is not for us to know*; being known to the Father alone, and *put in his own power*. But ſtill, what there is need we ſhould be told concerning it, the ſcripture hath revealed: that it ſhall come unexpectedly, and that it ſhall come ſoon. The general judgment may come, when we leaſt think of it. But however diſtant it may poſſibly be in itſelf, yet to every one of us it is undoubtedly in effect very near, and even at the door. For *it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment* ||. A few years, it may be a few days, will bring us to our end here: and in whatever ſtate death finds us, in the ſame will the laſt judgment find us alſo. *For there is no device, nor wiſdom in the grave* ¶: but *where the tree falleth there ſhall*

* John v. 22, 27. † Dan. vii. 10, 13. ‡ Heb. iv. 15.
§ Rev. vi. 16, 17. || Heb. ix. 27. ¶ Eccl. ix. 10.

ſhall it be *. *Take heed* therefore *to yourſelves, leſt your hearts be overcharged*, either with the pleaſures and amuſements, or the *cares* and labours *of this life: and ſo that day come upon you unawares: for as a ſnare ſhall it come on all them that dwell on the whole earth* †. *The evil ſervant that ſhall ſay in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming; and ſhall begin to ſmite his fellow-ſervants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: the Lord of that ſervant ſhall come in a day, that he looketh not for him; and in an hour, that he is not aware of; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth* ‡. *Watch ye therefore, and be ready: bleſſed is that ſervant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing* §.

4. The things, for which we ſhall be judged, are, all voluntary deeds, words and thoughts. "For we muſt appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body ‖." Now, what we ſay, and what we think deſignedly, is as truly part of our doings, as what we act. Our diſcourſe may be of as much ſervice or harm to others; and even our inward imaginations may as much prove us to be good or bad in ourſelves, and contribute to make us yet better or worſe. Often indeed we cannot help wicked fancies coming into our minds; and that alone will never be imputed to us as a ſin. But we can help inviting, indulging, and delighting in them: and if we do not, it is juſt, that we ſhould account for our fault. And on the other hand, it is fit and reaſonable, that every good perſon ſhould be rewarded, not only for the religious and worthy actions that he hath performed; but for every good word, that hath proceeded from his good heart; for his pious and virtuous purpoſes and affections. For God ſees the one, juſt as clearly, as the other: "there is no creature, that is not manifeſt in his ſight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do ¶." And certainly what he ſees, and ſees to be proper for his notice, he will not fail to take ſuitable notice of it. The ſcripture therefore aſſures us, with the utmoſt reaſon; not only, that "by our words we ſhall be juſtified, and by our words condemned;" giving account for the very *idleſt* and ſlighteſt of them, either with grief or joy, according

* Eccl. xi. 3. † Luke xxi. 34, 35. ‡ Mat. xxiv. 48,—51.
§ Ibid. 42, 44, 46. ‖ 2 Cor. v. 10. ¶ Heb. iv. 13.

cording as its tendency was right or wrong: but also, that "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ;" "for that there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known †." "For God shall bring every work in judgment, with every secret thing; whether it be good, or whether it be evil §."

Therefore, with respect to other persons, let us be charitable, and "judge nothing" needlessly "before the time, until the Lord come; who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of all hearts ‖." And, with respect to ourselves, let us be easy under human censures, if we have given no occasion for them; for in that case, "it is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment ¶:" But let us carefully prepare for the Divine sentence, by "perfecting holiness in the fear of God *;" and after all our care, let us be thoroughly humble: for though "we know nothing of ourselves, yet are we not hereby justified," if it be through partiality or forgetfulness, as possibly it may; "but he that judgeth us, is the Lord ⁺."

5. As to the manner of the judgment, it will be with the greatest solemnity and awfulness, and with the greatest justice and equity. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven ‡‡," "with his mighty angels, in flaming fire §§;" and "the trumpet shall sound ‖‖," and "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and come forth ¶¶." "Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory **," "and the books shall be opened, and they shall be judged out of those things, which are written in the books, according to their works ††." As "many as have sinned without a revealed law, shall perish without a revealed law: and as many as have sinned in the law," whether Jewish or Christian, "shall be judged by the law ‡‡." "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom much is committed, of him will the more be asked ⁂." He "that hath sowed sparingly, shall

* Mat. xii. 36, 37. † Rom. ii. 16. ‡ Mat. x. 26. § Eccl. xii. 14. ‖ Cor. iv. 5.
¶ Ibid. 3. * 2 Cor. vii. 1. ⁺ Cor. iv. 4. ‡‡ 1 Thess. iv. 16.
§§ 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. ‖‖ 1 Cor. xv. 52. ¶¶ John v. 28, 29.
** Matt. xxv. 31. †† Rev. xx. 12. ‡‡ Rom. ii. 12.
⁂ Luke xii. 48.

shall reap also sparingly; and he which hath sowed bountifully, shall reap also bountifully *." "Whatsoever a man hath sowed, that shall he also reap †."

"What manner of persons ought we to be then, in all holy conversation and godliness: looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God; wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless: grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: to him be glory, both now and for ever. Amen ‡."

* 2 Cor. ix. 6. † Gal. vi. 7. ‡ 2 Pet. iii. 11,—14, 18.

LECTURE XIII.

CREED.

Article VIII.—*I believe in the Holy Ghost.*

THE former articles having expressed the belief of Christians concerning the two first persons of the sacred trinity, the Father and the Son; our Creed proceeds in this to the third object of our baptismal faith, the Holy Ghost. And to explain it properly, there will be need to speak, First, Of his nature: Secondly, Of his peculiar office in the work of our redemption: Thirdly, Of the duties owing to him: Fourthly, Of the sins, which we are liable to commit against him.

I. Of the nature of the Holy Ghost, or Spirit. For *Ghost*, in the ancient use of our language, denoted the same thing, which Spirit doth now: a substance different from body or matter.

matter. Indeed we ſtill uſe it, in expreſſing the departure of the ſpirit from the body, which we call *giving up the ghoſt*; and in ſpeaking of ſuppoſed apparitions of the ſpirits of perſons after their deceaſe. Hence alſo the catechiſm mentions *ghoſtly dangers*; and the communion ſervice, *ghoſtly counſels*; meaning ſuch dangers, and ſuch counſels, as relate to our ſpiritual part.

In like manner, the Holy Ghoſt is the Holy Spirit: concerning whoſe nature, we can know, as I told you before concerning that of the Son, only what reſults from the diſcoveries made to us in ſcripture. And theſe, though they enlighten us but in part, are both credible and ſufficient. For it is no objection againſt believing what God hath revealed in relation to any ſubject, that many queſtions may be aſked about what he hath not revealed, to which we can give no anſwer. And he will never expect us, in this or any matter, to apprehend more, than he hath afforded us the means of apprehending. Now the chief things, revealed in the preſent caſe, are the following.

The Holy Ghoſt is not merely an attribute or power of the Father, but hath a real ſubſiſtence, diſtinct both from the Father and the Son. For the New Teſtament expreſsly and repeatedly uſes the word, *he* concerning him *: which is never uſed in that manner of a mere attribute or power. It aſcribes to him, will and underſtanding †: it ſpeaks of him as being ſent by the Father, coming and acting on various occaſions, relative both to the Son and to others; nay, as ſhewing "himſelf in a bodily ſhape, like a dove ‡."

Further, The Holy Ghoſt is, truly and ſtrictly ſpeaking, God. For the language of ſcripture concerning him is ſuch, as cannot belong to any created being. He is there called, *the eternal Spirit* §, *the Lord* ‖: ſaid to *quicken*, or *give life* ¶; to be every where preſent with all good Chriſtians *; to "ſearch all things, yea, the deep things of God, even as the things of a man are known by his own ſpirit, which is in him †." Chriſt, being conceived by him, became *the Son of God* ††. Chriſtians, by his dwelling in them, become *the temples of the Holy Ghoſt* ‖‖, or,

* xv. 26. xvi. 13. † Rom. viii. 27. Heb. ii. 4. Compare
‡ Luke iii. 22. § Heb. ix. 14. ‖ 2 Cor. iii. 17.
ii. 18. * John xiv. 16, 17. † 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.
†† Luke i. 35 ‖‖ 1 Cor. vi. 19.

or, as another place expreſſes it, *the temples of God* *. Ananias, by lying on him, *lyed not unto men, but unto God* †. He is ſaid, to diſtribute ſpiritual and miraculous gifts, *dividing to every man ſeverally, as he will* ‡. "And as the diſciples miniſtered to the Lord and faſted, the Holy Ghoſt ſaid, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work, whereunto I have called them §." He is repreſented by our Saviour, as able fully to ſupply the want of his perſonal preſence with the apoſtles ||. And laſtly, He is joined with the Father and the Son, on equal terms, both in the form of baptiſm, where his name and theirs are uſed alike ¶; and in the ſolemn form of bleſſing, where "the fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt" is placed on a level with "the love of God, and the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt **."

Theſe, and many other ſcripture expreſſions, are ſurely ſuch, as cannot be uſed of any creature: but prove the Spirit, as others, already mentioned to you, prove the Son, to partake of the ſame authority and perfections, and therefore the ſame nature, with the Father. Yet we know, that though in holy writ men and angels are, ſometimes on account of their extenſive power, ſometimes as repreſentatives of the Deity, called gods, yet in literal propriety of ſpeech, there is but one God, and not either three Supreme Beings, or a ſuperior and an inferior Object of adoration. "Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord ††." "Is there a God beſides me? yea, there is no God: I know not any ‡‡." "Before me was no god formed: neither ſhall there be after me §§." "I am the Lord, —— and my glory will I not give to another |||." "Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve ¶¶." Since then there is not a plurality of gods; and yet the Son and the Spirit are each of them God, no leſs than the Father: it plainly follows, that they are, in a manner by us inconceivable, ſo united to him, that *theſe three are one* ***; but ſtill, in a manner equally inconceivable, ſo diſtinguiſhed from him, that no one of them is the other.

Now

* 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. † Acts v. 3, 4. ‡ 1 Cor. xii. 11.
§ Acts xiii. 2. || John xvi. 7. ¶ Mat. xxviii. 19. ** 2 Cor. xiii. 14.
†† Deut. vi. 4. ‡‡ Iſa. xliv. 8. §§ Iſa. xliii. 10. ||| Iſa. xlii. 8.
¶¶ Mat. iv. 10. *** John v. 7.

Now certainly, in general, it is no contradiction, that things ſhould be in one reſpect the ſame, and in another different. But the particular and explicite notion of this union and this diſtinction, the word of God hath not given us. Whether we are capable of apprehending it, we know not: and therefore it is no wonder in the leaſt, that we are incapable of forming one to ourſelves. For indeed we are incapable of forming clear notions concerning thouſands of other things, which are unſpeakably leſs beyond our reach. All that we can do therefore, is, to uſe thoſe expreſſions in relation to it, which either ſcripture furniſhes, or experience hath found uſeful to guard againſt falſe apprehenſions: for with very imperfect ones we muſt be content. Thus, in ſpeaking of the difference of the Son and Spirit from the Father and from each other, we ſay, with our Bible, that the Son *is begotten*, and the Spirit *proceeds*, without pretending to know any further, what theſe two words mean, than that each denotes ſomething different from the other; and both ſomething different from creation out of nothing. And this diſtinction giving occaſion to ſcripture to ſpeak of them in ſomewhat the ſame manner, as of different perſons amongſt men: we call them the three perſons of the Trinity: not at all intending by it to ſay, that the word *perſon*, ſuits them in every reſpect that it ſuits us: but only to acknowledge, that as we find them thus ſpoken of, we doubt not but there is ſome ſufficient ground for it. And as we find further, that in point of rank, the perſon of the Father is repreſented as ſupreme, the Son as ſubordinate to him, the Holy Spirit to both; and in point of relation to us, creation is aſcribed peculiarly to the firſt, redemption to the ſecond, ſanctification to the third; and yet, in ſome ſenſe, each of theſe things to each: we imitate the whole of this likewiſe. Still we are very ſenſible, at the ſame time, that many doubts and difficulties may be raiſed, almoſt about every part of the doctrine, than God, in his unſearchable wiſdom, hath given us light enough to ſolve. But we apprehend it is our duty, to believe with humility and ſimplicity what the ſcripture hath taught us; and to be contentedly ignorant of what it doth not teach us; without indulging ſpeculations and conjectures, which will only perplex the ſubject more, inſtead of clearing it. And ſurely it is our duty alſo, to interpret with

candour,

candour, and uſe with prudent moderation whatever well-meant phraſes the church of Chriſt, eſpecially in its earlier days, hath applied to this ſubject; to think, on matters, which are both ſo myſterious in their nature, and ſo hard to be expreſſed, with great charity of other perſons: and for ourſelves, to keep cloſe with great care to ſo much as is plain and practical. In order to this, I now proceed to lay before you.

II. The peculiar office of the Spirit in the work of our redemption: on account of which he is called, in our catechiſm, *God the Holy Ghoſt, who ſanctified us, and all the elect people of God.* For probably he is called the Holy Spirit ſo frequently in ſcripture, and *the Spirit of holineſs* once *, not merely as being perfectly holy in himſelf, which the Father and the Son are alſo, but as being the cauſe of holineſs in believers; who are elected by God to eternal life, on foreſeeing that their faith will produce obedience.

To be holy is to be pure from defilement; but particularly, in this caſe, from the defilement of iniquity: and being ſanctified is being made holy: to which bleſſed change in ſinful man, the Spirit of God, we are taught, contributes many ways.

In baptiſm we are *born again of Water and of the Spirit* †; reſtored by him to the ſtate of God's children, and endued with the principles of a new, that is the Chriſtian, life. As we grow up, it is through him, that our underſtandings are enlightened by the knowledge of God's will. He directed the ancient prophets in what they preached and wrote. For *holy men of old time ſpake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt* ‡: which more eſpecially *teſtified beforehand the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glories that ſhould follow* §. Then afterwards, when our Saviour became Man, the Holy Ghoſt was upon him, and accompanied him through the whole of his miniſtration ||: and after his aſcenſion was communicated more fully than before to his apoſtles; to *teach them all things* needful, *and bring to their remembrance whatever he had ſaid to them* ¶: ſo that in all their diſcourſes for the inſtruction of mankind, *it was not* ſo much *they who ſpoke*, as *the Spirit of the Father that ſpoke in them.*

* Rom. i. 4. † John iii. 5. ‡ 2 Pet. i. 21. § 1 Pet. i. 11.
|| Mat. iii. 16. Luke iii. 22. iv. 1. Acts i. 2. x. 38. ¶ John xiv. 26.

*them**. Nor can we doubt, but he afforded them equal assistance, at least in what they wrote for the use of all future ages. The same Spirit was also their comforter under every suffering: and, lastly, bore witness to the truth of their doctrine and our faith, by a multitude of *signs and wonders and* supernatural *gifts* †: by which means, and the ministry of their successors, whom likewise *the Holy Ghost made Overseers over Christ's flock* ‡, the light of his gospel hath filled the world, and now shines upon us.

Nor is it outwardly alone, that he reveals and confirms to us Divine truths: but as the blessed Jesus promised, that *he should dwell in his* disciples, and *abide with them for ever* §; so by his inward operations, the credibility of which I shall, God willing, prove to you in its proper place, he *opens our hearts* ‖ to receive the word of God, influences our affections to delight in it, and excites our wills to act conformably to it: for which reasons good persons are said to *be led by the Spirit* ¶; and all Christian graces to be *the fruits of the Spirit* *. With the wicked *he strives* ⁂, till they obstinately harden themselves, and then forsakes them. But those, who yield to his motions, he *renews* ††, and *strengthens with might in the inner man* §§; *helps their infirmities*, and both directs and animates their prayers, thus *making*, as it were, *intercession* ‖‖ within them. By this *one Spirit*, being all Christians, they are united into *one body* ¶¶, and made to love each other. *By the Holy Ghost* also, *the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts* **, teaching us to look upon him, not as an austere Master, but a kind Parent; or, in the language of St Paul, to cry, *Abba, Father* ††. And thus *the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit*, joins with our consciences to complete the evidence, *that we are the sons of God* ‡‡: from whence arises that *joy in the Holy Ghost* ⁂, which different persons have in very different degrees: and therefore no one should despond, because he feels but little, or at times perhaps nothing of it, provided he truly honours and serves God. But to

* Mat. x. 20. † Heb. ii. 4. ‡ Acts xx. 28. § John xiv. 16.
‖ Acts xxvi. 14. ¶ Rom. viii. 14. * Gal. v. 22. ⁂ Gen. vi 3.
†† Tit. iii. 5. §§ Eph. iii. 16. ‖‖ Rom. viii. 26, 27. ¶¶ Eph. iv. 4.
** Rom. v. 5. †† Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6. ‡‡ Rom. viii. 16.
⁂ Rom. xiv. 17.

to ſome perſons, on ſome occaſions, the heavenly Comforter vouchſafes, both ſtrong aſſurances of their good ſtate; "(hereby know we, that God abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us *;)" and ſuch lively conſolations from it, as amount to a pledge and foretaſte of happineſs to come. Accordingly, they are ſaid to be "ſealed with the Holy Spirit of promiſe, which is the earneſt of their inheritance †."

But to prevent wicked perſons of enthuſiaſtic tempers from miſtaking, as they often have done, their own groundleſs confidence for the inward teſtimony of the Divine Spirit, they ſhould be carefully reminded, that *by our fruits we are known* ‡, and muſt know ourſelves §; that "the fruit of the Spirit is in all righteouſneſs and truth ||," and only "good men are full of the Holy Ghoſt ¶." "For into a malicious ſoul he will not enter; nor dwell in the body that is ſubject unto ſin. The Holy Spirit of diſcipline will flee deceit; and remove from thoughts, that are without underſtanding; and will not abide, when unrighteouſneſs cometh in *."

III. The next thing propoſed, was to ſpeak of the duties owing to the Holy Ghoſt; which, beſides the general one of honouring him ſuitably to his nature, as God, are, in particular, to be baptized in his name, as I have already mentioned; pray for his graces; for God "giveth grace unto the humble †," and "will give his Holy Spirit to them that aſk him ‡‡;" to be heartily thankful for all his good motions, and conſcientiouſly to obey them in every inſtance. By this laſt I do not mean, that we ſhould *believe every Spirit* §§; follow every ſtrong imagination of our own, or pretence of light from above in others: but adhere ſteadily to that rule of life, which the Holy Ghoſt hath directed the writers of ſcripture to teach us, and inwardly prompts and diſpoſes us to obſerve. For other inſpiration, than this, being now become unneceſſary; we have no reaſon to expect, but much reaſon to diſtruſt it. But eſpecially, if we be urged, under colour of ſuch authority, to break any one ſtanding precept of the goſpel, or add to, or take away from, any ſingle article of our Creed; *though*

* 1 John iii. 24. † Eph. i. 13, 14. ‡ Mat. vii. 16. § 1 John ii. 3.
|| Eph. v. 9. ¶ Acts xi. 24. * Wiſd. i. 4, 5. † James iv. 6.
‡‡ Luke xi. 13. §§ 1 John iv. 1.

*an angel from heaven** were to require it, we are not to yield; but keep close to "the faith and holy commandment, which were once delivered to the saints †," and shall never be altered.

These then are our duties to the ever-blessed Spirit. There are likewise mentioned in scripture,

IV. Sins against him. And one of these, not all, as melancholy persons are apt to imagine, but one alone, is said by our Saviour to be unpardonable: which is *blasphemy against the Holy Ghost* ‡. Now, that means only, speaking reproachful words, deliberately and maliciously, against the miracles done by the power of the Holy Ghost, or the supernatural gifts proceeding from him. And the only persons, to whom Christ declared, that this should not be forgiven, were those, who had the testimony of their own senses for the reality of these miracles and gifts; and, notwithstanding the fullest evidence of their coming from the Spirit of God, obstinately persisted in reviling them, and even ascribed them to the devil. Now, there is a plain reason why this sin, under these circumstances, must be unpardonable. The persons guilty of it had stood out against all the means, which Heaven had provided for the conviction and conversion of mankind: none more powerful remained to bring them to repentance; and, as they could not be forgiven without repenting, there was plainly no way left for their recovery.

But then it is equally plain, that persons, who were not witnesses to any such miraculous powers; but live as we do, many ages after they are ceased; cannot, in this respect, sin to the same degree of guilt, since it is not against the same degree of evidence: and that as they, who were guilty of it originally, were unbelievers in Christ, so indeed no believer in him, continuing such, can possibly design, whilst his thoughts and words are in his own command, to speak evil of the Holy Ghost, or his mighty works. Nor therefore can he come under the condemnation of those, whom the epistle to the Hebrews describes, as "wilfully doing despite to the Spirit of grace;" and of whom it pronounces, that "there remains for them no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful expectation of judge-

* Gal. i. 8. † 2 Pet. ii. 21. Jude, verse 3. ‡ Mat. xii. 31. Mark iii. 28, 21. Luke xii. 10.

judgement *." Believers may indeed raſhly and thoughtleſsly uſe profane words concerning the Holy Ghoſt: but theſe, though undoubtedly great offences, and too likely to make greater ſtill, are very far from the unpardonable ſin. And as for what ſome good perſons are often terrified about, the wicked imaginations that come into their minds, and expreſſions that come out of their mouths, at times, almoſt whether they will or not; in proportion as they are involuntary, they are not criminal in them, be they in their own nature ever ſo bad. When therefore poor ſcrupulous ſouls affright themſelves about ſuch things as theſe; or when they who have not ſinned at all againſt the Spirit, otherwiſe than as every ill action is a ſin againſt him; or have ſinned in a quite different manner from the Jews in the goſpel, and heartily repented of their ſin; when they apprehend, that notwithſtanding this they cannot be pardoned; they intirely miſtake their own caſe: either through ignorance, or falſe opinions infuſed into them; or exceſſive tenderneſs of mind; or indeed more commonly by reaſon of ſome bodily diſorder, though perhaps unperceived by themſelves, which depreſſes their ſpirits, and clouds their underſtandings, and requires the help of medicine.

Another ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, mentioned in ſcripture, is *lying to him* †: which means there, aſſerting falſehoods, being conſcious that they were ſuch, to perſons inſpired by him with the knowledge of mens hearts, as did Ananias and Sapphira. But the offences, which we are in danger of committing againſt him, are *reſiſting* ‡ and *quenching* § his good motions and influences, and *grieving him* || by *corrupt communication*, evil thoughts or unholy actions. Theſe things therefore let us diligently avoid; or, if we have fallen into them, ſincerely repent of them: the oppoſite duties let us conſcientiouſly practiſe, and ſtedfaſtly perſevere in them: for ſo ſhall we "commend ourſelves to God, and to the Spirit of his grace; who is able to build us up, and give us an inheritance amongſt them who are ſanctified ¶;" to which he of his mercy bring us all, for the ſake of our Redeemer Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

* Heb. x. 26,—29. † Acts v. 3. ‡ Acts vii. 51.
§ 1 Theſ. v. 19. || Eph. iv. 29, 30. ¶ Acts xx. 32.

LEC-

LECTURE XIV.

CREED.

Article IX.—*The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints.*

THE moſt ancient Creeds of all went no further than a declaration of faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, in whoſe name we are baptiſed. For in this profeſſion all thoſe other points of doctrine were underſtood to be implied, which it was very ſoon after found moſt convenient to expreſs by additional articles. And the firſt of theſe, is that now to be explained: wherein we declare our belief in *the Holy Catholic Church*, and *the Communion of Saints*.

The ſcripture word, tranſlated *church*, originally ſignifies any regular and orderly aſſembly of perſons, called to meet on any occaſion. But in the Bible it ſignifies, almoſt always, a religious aſſembly. And when uſed in its largeſt ſenſe there, it comprehends the whole number of good perſons, in every age: all thoſe, who from the beginning of the world, under whatever diſpenſation of true religion, have believed in God, and ſerved him, according to the degree of their light; and ſhall in the end of it be gathered together, and rewarded by him, according to the degree of their improvement. This is *the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, which are written in heaven*, as the epiſtle to the Hebrews calls it *. And ſince the ſalvation of all theſe is owing to Jeſus Chriſt; the only name, by which men can be ſaved †, they are all, in that reſpect, members of the Church of Chriſt, how obſcure and imperfect ſoever their knowledge of a Saviour may have been. But the word is uſually taken in a narrower ſenſe. And thus it is ſometimes applied to the Jewiſh nation: which in the Old Teſtament is called by a phraſe of juſt the ſame meaning, *the congre-*

* Heb. xii. 23. † Acts iv. 12.

congregation of the Lord *, and by St Stephen, *the church, which was in the wilderneſs* †. But the church more eſpecially meant here in the Creed, is the Chriſtian: which, though in ſome reſpects the ſame with the Jewiſh, in others differed from it; which therefore our Saviour, in the goſpel, ſpeaks of himſelf, as about to *build* ‡; and accordingly, immediately after his aſcenſion, in the Acts of the Apoſtles, we find it built: that is, we find an aſſembly of believers in Chriſt, met together at Jeruſalem, under their proper teachers and governors, to worſhip God, and edify one another, in the manner which he appointed.

This was the original Chriſtian Church; ſmall indeed at firſt: but *the Lord*, we read, *added to the church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved* §; till, the goſpel ſpreading every way, the number of Chriſtians, which in the beginning required no more than one congregation, was of neceſſity divided into ſeveral. And henceforward we find many churches ſpoken of, at ſome times: yet all theſe many ſpoken of as one, at others. For ſince they all proceeded from the ſame ſource; are all, as the apoſtle argues, *one body*; and are directed by *one Spirit*; *even as they are called in one hope of their calling*; as they have *one Lord, one faith, one baptiſm, one God and Father of all* ‖: ſo are they, in great propriety of ſpeech, though *many*, yet *one in Chriſt* ¶. His church therefore is the whole number of thoſe, who believe on him. How much ſoever they may differ in ſome opinions or practices, yet they are one in all things eſſential. How wide ſoever they may be diſperſed thoughout the world, they ſhall at laſt be *gathered together unto him* *. We can judge only according to appearances: and therefore to us all thoſe muſt be members of Chriſt's church, who make a viſible profeſſion of being Chriſtians. But God ſees every ſecret thought: and in his eye, they alone belong truly to his church who truly ſerve him in the *hidden man of the heart* †: that inward ſincerity, which to human eyes is inviſible. And this inviſible true church of Chriſt here on earth is militant; carrying on a continual war againſt the outward temptations of the world and the devil, and the inward ſtruggles of every wrong

* Num. xvi. 3, &c. † Acts vii. 38. ‡ Mat. xvi. 18. § Acts ii. 47.
‖ Eph. iv. 4, 5. ¶ Rom. xii. 5. * 2 Theſſ. ii. 1.
† 1 Peter iii. 4.

wrong inclination: till having faithfully *fought the good fight*, and really, though not perfectly, *gotten the victory* in this life; it ſhall, in the next, become triumphant, and receive the *crown of righteouſneſs* *.

Such then being the church of Chriſt in its different ſtates: let us proceed to conſider the two qualities, aſcribed to it in the Creed: that it is *holy*, and that it is *catholic*.

To be holy is to be ſeparate from all defilement and impurity, particularly of the moral kind. Thus God is perfectly holy: angels and good men are ſo in their different degrees. And becauſe nothing unclean or impure, in any ſenſe, ought to enter into the ſervice of God, therefore what is ſet apart from common uſe, and dedicated to his worſhip, is called holy alſo. Hence the places, times, and things, that are ſo employed, have that name given them. And the perſons, who attend on his miniſtry, are ſtiled holy on account of their outward relation to him, whether they are really and inwardly ſuch as they ought, or not. Now in outward profeſſion, the whole viſible church of Chriſt is holy: ſeparated and diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the world, by acknowledging his holy laws, and uſing the means of holineſs, which he hath appointed. But in the inward ſenſe, and the only one which will avail hereafter, they alone are indeed members of his holy church, who by the help of theſe means, do really improve themſelves in piety and virtue, becoming *holy in all manner of converſation*, as *he which hath called them is holy* †: and ſuch as are truly ſo here, ſhall be made completely ſo hereafter. For "Chriſt loved the church; and gave himſelf for it, that he might ſanctify and cleanſe it with the waſhing of water; and preſent it to himſelf a glorious church, not having ſpot or wrinkle; but that it ſhould be holy, and without blemiſh ‡." Aſk your hearts then; Are you giving your beſt diligence to "cleanſe yourſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God §?" "For without it no man ſhall ſee the Lord ||."

The word *catholic*, applied to the church in our Creed, is no where uſed in ſcripture; but frequently in the early Chriſtian writers: and it means *univerſal*, extending to all mankind.

* 2 Tim. iv. 7. Rev. xv. 2. † 1 Pet. i. 15. ‡ Eph. v. 25,—27.
§ 2 Cor. vii. 1. || Heb. xii. 14.

kind. The Jewiſh church was not univerſal, but particular: for it conſiſted only of one nation; and their law permitted ſacrifices only in one temple; nor could ſeveral other precepts of it be obſerved in countries at any conſiderable diſtance from thence; but the Chriſtian conſiſts *of every kindred, tongue and people** equally; and *offers unto the name of God in every place, from the riſing of the ſun unto the going down of the ſame, incenſe and a pure offering*†. The Catholic Church then is the univerſal church, ſpread through the world: and the Catholic faith is the univerſal faith; *that form of doctrine*, which the apoſtles *delivered* ‡ to the whole church, and it received. What this faith was, we may learn from their writings, contained in the New Teſtament: and at ſo great a diſtance of time, we can learn it with certainty no where elſe. Every church or ſociety of Chriſtians, that preſerves this catholic or univerſal faith, accompanied with true charity, is a part of the catholic or univerſal church: and becauſe the parts are of the ſame nature with the whole, it hath been uſual to call every church ſingly, which is ſo qualified, a Catholic church. And in this ſenſe, churches that differ widely in ſeveral notions and cuſtoms, may, notwithſtanding, each of them, be truly catholic churches. But the church of Rome, which is one of the moſt corrupted parts of the catholic church, both in faith and love, hath preſumed to call itſelf the whole Catholic Church, the univerſal church: which it no more is, than one diſeaſed limb, though perhaps the larger for being diſeaſed, is the whole body of a man. And by attempting to exclude us, they take the direct way to exclude themſelves, unleſs God impute their uncharitable way of thinking and acting, as we hope he will, to excuſable ignorance and miſtake. The church of England pretends not indeed, abſurdly, to be the whole catholic church; but is undoubtedly a ſound and excellent member of it. So that we have much better ground to call ourſelves Catholics than they; were ſuch names worth diſputing about, which they are not: only one would not flatter and harden them, by giving them a title, which they both claim unjuſtly, and turn into an argument againſt us.

In this *holy catholic church* our Creed profeſſes *belief*. But the meaning is not, that we engage to believe all things, with-

* Rev. v. 9. † Mal. i. 11. ‡ Rom. vi. 17.

out exception, of which the majority of the church, at any time, ſhall be perſuaded: and much leſs, what the rulers of it, or, it may be, a ſmall part of them, who may pleaſe to call themſelves the church, ſhall at any time require: for then we muſt believe many plain falſehoods, uncertainties without number, and contrary doctrines, as contrary parties prevail. Our church doth indeed believe whatever the firſt and beſt ages of Chriſtianity thought neceſſary: whatever all the other churches of the preſent age agree in. But this is more, than we declare in the Creed. For there, as believing in God, means only believing that there is a God; and believing in the reſurrection, means only believing that there ſhall be a reſurrection: ſo believing in the holy catholic church, means only believing that by our Saviour's appointment there was founded, and through his mercy ſhall ever continue, a ſociety of perſons, of what nation or nations is indifferent, who have faith in his name, and obey his laws: not indeed without being deformed and disfigured, by mixtures both of ſin and error; but ſtill, without being deſtroyed by either. For as he hath promiſed, that *the gates of hell*, or of the inviſible world, that is, perſecution and death, *ſhall not prevail againſt his church**, ſo neither ſhall any other power. Nothing ſhall aboliſh it: though ſeveral things may obſcure and corrupt it. That ſin doth, we ſee: why then may not error too? It is certainly not a worſe thing: nor is our Saviour's promiſe a greater ſecurity againſt the one, than the other. He requires us indeed to *hear the church*. But in what caſe? *If thy brother trespass against thee*, admoniſh him privately. This relates then, not to diſputed ſpeculative opinions, but to known practical tranſgreſſions againſt our neighbour. *If he neglect* private admonition, *tell it unto the church*. Not ſurely the whole catholic church, all over the world; that is impoſſible: but the particular church to which you both belong. Now, all ſides allow, that every particular church is fallible; and therefore to be heard no farther, than it appears to be in the right. It follows next: And *if he neglect to hear the church*; if he will not reform his injurious behaviour on a public warning, *let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican*†: treat him no longer with the tenderneſs and regard, that is due to a good Chriſtian;

* Mat. xvi. 18. † Mat. xviii. 15,—17.

Chriſtian; but conſider him in the ſame light with an infidel ſinner, till he makes reparation. This rule therefore by no means proves the infallibility, even of the univerſal church, and much leſs of the Romiſh, which is far from univerſal; but relates to a matter intirely different. And it ſtill remains true, that profeſſing to believe in the holy catholic church, is only acknowledging, that Chriſt hath formed the whole number of his followers, under him their Head, into one regular and ſacred body or ſociety, to laſt for ever: the unity and holineſs of which is to be carefully preſerved by what the latter part of this article ſpecifies,

The Communion of Saints. The word, *ſaints*, is of the ſame meaning with the the word *holy*: and therefore comprehends all Chriſtians, in the manner which I have juſt explained. Having *communion*, is being intitled to partake of benefits and kindneſſes, and bound to make ſuitable returns for them. And thus Chriſtians, or ſaints, have communion or *fellowſhip* with *the Father, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift; with his Son Jeſus Chriſt**, through whom forgiveneſs and mercy are conveyed to us: with the Holy Ghoſt, whoſe ſanctifying graces are conferred on ſuch as duly qualify their hearts for the reception of them. And for theſe bleſſings we owe all thankfulneſs, and all duty, in thought, word, and deed. Chriſtians have alſo communion with the holy angels; as theſe *are miniſtring ſpirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them, who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation*†. And undoubtedly we ought to think of what they do for us, with an inward ſenſe of gratitude and love. But as we are unacquainted with particulars, we can make no particular acknowledgements: nor ought we to make any general ones, by outward expreſſions of reſpect; ſince *worſhipping God alone* is commanded ‡, and *worſhipping angels* condemned §, in ſcripture.

With reſpect to thoſe of our own nature, we are bound ſo far to hold communion, even with the worſt of unbelievers, as not only to do them every kind of juſtice, but ſincerely to wiſh, and, if occaſion offer, heartily endeavour their good, both in body and ſoul. But to all, *who have obtained the like precious faith with ourſelves* ||, we bear a ſtill nearer relation; as

* 1 John i. 3. Jam. i. 17. † Heb. i. 14. ‡ Mat. iv. 10.
§ Col. ii. 18. || 2 Pet. i. 1.

being, in a peculiar ſenſe, children of the ſame Father, diſciples of the ſame Maſter, animated by the ſame Spirit, members of the ſame body. And theſe things oblige us to the utmoſt care of preſerving, by prudent order and mutual forbearance, as much unity in the church, as poſſibly we can. Such indeed, as obſtinately deny the fundamental doctrines, or tranſgreſs the fundamental precepts of Chriſtianity, ought to be rejected from Chriſtian communion. But to renounce communicating with any others, who are willing to admit us to it on lawful terms, is the way to cut off ourſelves, not them, from the body of Chriſt: who yet, we doubt not, will allow thoſe on both ſides to belong to his church, who, through pardonable paſſions or miſtakes, will not allow one another to do ſo.

And as we ſhould maintain communion with all proper perſons, we ſhow our diſpoſition to it in all proper ways: attend on the public inſtruction, join in the public worſhip, ſacraments and diſcipline, which our Lord hath appointed; and keep the whole of them pure from all forbidden, or ſuſpicious alterations or mixtures: avoid, with great care, both giving and taking needleſs offence, in reſpect to theſe, or any matters; and, by all fit means, *edify one another in love* *: obeying thoſe who are ſet over us; condeſcending to thoſe who are beneath us; eſteeming and honouring the wiſe and virtuous; teaching and admoniſhing the ignorant and faulty; bearing with the weak, relieving the poor, and comforting the afflicted.

Nor have we communion only with the ſaints on earth: but are of one city, and one family, with ſuch, as are already got ſafe to heaven. Doubtleſs they exerciſe that communion towards us, by loving and praying for their brethren, whom they have left behind them. And we are to exerciſe it towards them, not by addreſſing petitions to them, which we are neither authoriſed to offer, nor have any ground to think they can hear; but by rejoicing in their happineſs, thanking God for the grace which he hath beſtowed on them, and the examples which they have left us: holding their memories in honour, imitating their virtues, and beſeeching the Diſpoſer of all things, that having followed them in holineſs here, we may meet

* Rom. xiv. 19. Eph. iv. 16.

meet them in happineſs hereafter; and become, in the fulleſt ſenſe, *Fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and of the houſehold of God* *: *having, with all thoſe that are departed in the true faith of his holy name, our perfect conſummation and bliſs, both in body and ſoul, in his eternal and everlaſting glory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen* †.

* Eph. ii. 19. † Burial Office.

LECTURE XV.

CREED.

Article X.—*The Forgiveneſs of Sins.*

WE are now come to that article of the Creed, for which all the preceding ones have been preparing the way: a doctrine, of the greateſt comfort to believe, and the utmoſt danger to miſapprehend. I ſhall therefore endeavour clearly to explain,

I. The nature of ſin, its different kinds, and its guilt.

II. The nature and conditions of the forgiveneſs promiſed to it.

I. The nature of ſin. Both men and all other beings, endued with ſufficient reaſon, muſt perceive a difference between different inclinations and actions, of their own and others: in conſequence of which, they muſt approve ſome, as right and good; and diſapprove others, as wrong and evil. Now this diſtinction, which we are capable of ſeeing, God muſt ſee as much more clearly, as his underſtanding is more perfect than ours. Therefore he muſt entirely love what is good, and utterly hate what is evil: and his will muſt be, that all his rational creatures ſhould practiſe the former, and avoid the latter

ter. This he makes known to be his will, in ſome degree, to all men, however ignorant, by natural conſcience; and hath more fully made known to us, by the revelation of his holy word: wherein alſo, beſides thoſe things, which we of ourſelves might have known to be fit, he hath ſignified his pleaſure, that we ſhould obſerve ſome ſuther rules, which he knew to be uſeful and requiſite, though we ſhould otherwiſe not have diſcerned it. Now, the will and pleaſure of a perſon having authority, as God hath abſolute authority, is, when ſufficiently notified, a law. Thoſe laws of his, which human reaſon was able to teach us, are called natural or moral laws: thoſe, which he hath added to them, are called poſitive ones. Obedience to both ſorts is our duty; tranſgreſſion of either is ſin: whether it be by neglecting what the law commands, which is a ſin of omiſſion; or doing what it forbids, which is a ſin of commiſſion.

Further, As God hath a right to give us laws, he muſt have a right to puniſh us, if we break them. And we all of us feel inwardly, that ſin deſerves this puniſhment: which feeling is what we call a ſenſe of guilt. Some ſins have more guilt, that is, deſerve greater puniſhment than others: becauſe they are either worſe in their own nature; or accompanied with circumſtances, that aggravate, inſtead of alleviating them. Thus, if bad actions, known to be ſuch, are done with previous deliberation and contrivance, which are called wilful or preſumptuous ſins; they are very highly criminal. But if we do amiſs in ſome ſmaller matter, through inconſiderateneſs or other weakneſs of mind, or elſe through a ſudden unforeſeen attack of temptation; which are uſually called ſins of infirmity or ſurpriſe: theſe, though real, are yet leſs offences. And if, laſtly, we act wrong through invincible ignorance, that is, have no means of knowing better; then the action is not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, a fault in us, though it be in itſelf. But if we might, with a reaſonable attention, have known our duty, and did not attend; we are juſtly blameable, even for a careleſs ignorance, and full as much for a deſigned one, as if we had known ever ſo well.

Another difference in the kinds of ſins is this: that though they be only in ſmaller inſtances; yet if perſons take ſo little pains to guard againſt them, that they live in a conſtant or frequent

frequent practice of them, which are called habitual ſins; the guilt of theſe may be full as heavy as that of greater tranſgreſſions, provided they be leſs common. But if they be great and habitually indulged alſo; that makes the worſt of caſes.

Committing ſin can never be a ſlight matter. For it is acting as our own hearts tell us we ought not. It is likewiſe, for the moſt part, injuring, one way or anōther, our fellow-creatures: and it is always behaving undutifully and ungratefully to our Creator, who hath ſovereign power over us, and ſhows continual goodneſs to us. We may be ſure therefore, that the puniſhment, due to the leaſt ſin, is ſuch as will give us cauſe to wiſh from the bottom of our ſouls, that we had never done it. More enormous ones are of worſe deſert, according to their degeee. And ſince recompences proportionable to them are not, with any conſtancy, diſtributed in this world; as certainly as God is juſt, they will in the next; unleſs we obtain forgiveneſs in the mean time. And all will be made miſerable, as long as they are wicked.

This is the main of what human abilities unaſſiſted ſeem capable of diſcovering to us concerning ſin and its conſequences; excepting it be, that as we have a natural approbation of what is good, ſo we have, along with it, a natural proneneſs to what is evil: an inconſiſtence, for which reaſon finds it hard, if poſſible, to account.

But here moſt ſeaſonably revelation comes in; and teaches, not indeed all that we might wiſh, but all that we need to know of this whole matter: that our firſt parents were created upright; but ſoon tranſgreſſed a plain and eaſy command of God, intended for a trial of their obedience: by which they perverted and tainted their minds; forfeited the immortality, which God had deſigned them; brought diſeaſes and death on their bodies; and derived to us the ſame corrupt nature and mortal condition, to which they had reduced themſelves. An imperfect illuſtration of this lamentable change, and I give it for no other, we may have from our daily experience, that wretched poverty, fatal diſtempers, and even vicious inclinations, often deſcend from parents to their children. Now, the ſinful diſpoſitions, which our origin from our primitive parents hath produced in us, are called original ſin. And this tranſgreſſion of theirs may, very conſiſtently with Divine juſtice,

tice, occaſion, as the ſcripture ſhows it hath, our being condemned, as well as they, to temporal ſufferings and death. For even innocent creatures have no right to be exempt from them: and to fallen creatures they are peculiarly inſtructive and medicinal. The ſame tranſgreſſion may alſo, with equal juſtice, occaſion our being expoſed to a more difficult trial of our obedience, than we ſhould elſe have undergone; indeed than we ſhould be able, by the ſtrength which remains in us, to ſupport. And thus, were we left to ourſelves, we muſt, in conſequence of the fall of our firſt progenitors, become finally miſerable. But God is ready to give us more ſtrength, if we will aſk it: and he may undoubtedly ſubject us to any difficulties that he pleaſes, provided he beſtows on us, whether naturally or ſupernaturally, the power of going through them in the manner that he expects from us: which he certainly doth beſtow on all men. And if they uſe it, they will be accepted by him in a proper degree: what that is, we are no judges.

But when, inſtead of reſiſting our bad inclinations, as thro' the grace of God we may, we voluntarily follow and indulge them; then we fall into actual ſin; and are in ſtrictneſs of ſpeech guilty, and deſerving of puniſhment. And this puniſhment the ſcripture frequently expreſſes by the name of death. For death being the moſt terrible to human nature, of all the puniſhments that man inflicts; it is uſed to ſignify the moſt terrible, that God inflicts; even thoſe which extend beyond death, and are therefore called, *the ſecond death* *. Accordingly our Saviour directs his followers: *Be not afraid of them that kill the body; and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye ſhall fear. Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into hell: yea, I ſay unto you, fear him* †.

The nature and duration of the future ſufferings, reſerved for ſinners, are moſt awfully deſcribed in the word of God: the declarations of which concerning them I ſhall ſoon have occaſion to lay before you. But in the mean while we all know them to be ſuch, as may abundantly ſuffice to engage us in a moſt ſerious inquiry, how we ſhall obtain what was propoſed to be explained,

II. *The forgiveneſs of ſins.* Now this much our own reaſon evidently teaches; that when we have done amiſs, we are to undo

* Rev. xx. 14. xxi. 8. † Luke xii. 4, 5.

undo it, as far as we can. We are to diſapprove it, and be ſorry for it, as we have great cauſe; to beg pardon of God, for having offended him; to make the beſt amends we are able to our fellow-creatures, if we have injured them; to be very humble in our hearts, and very watchful in our future conduct. Theſe things, through God's help, we can do: and theſe are all, that nature directs us to do. Undoubtedly he will never accept leſs: but the queſtion is, whether he will ſo far accept this, as to be reconciled to us upon it. Since wickedneſs deſerves puniſhment, it may be juſtly puniſhed. Being ſorry for it, is not being innocent of it. And the moſt careful obedience afterwards no more makes a compenſation for what went before, than avoiding to run into a new debt pays off the old one: beſides that we never obey ſo well, as not to add continually ſome degree of freſh miſbehaviour. God indeed is merciful; but he is equally righteous and holy, and abhorrent of ſin. And what can the mere light of our own underſtandings diſcover to us, with any aſſurance, from theſe attributes joined? We ſee, that in this world the moſt merciful rulers, if they are juſt and wiſe alſo, which God is, often puniſh even thoſe offenders, who repent the moſt heartily. The honour and good order of their government requires it. And why may not he have reaſons of the ſame, or even of a different nature, for doing the ſame thing?

Still the caſe of penitents muſt be more favourable, than that of others. And there is ground for all ſuch to hope, that ſuch pity, as can, will be ſhown them in ſome manner, though they cannot be ſure how, or to what effect. And God hath been pleaſed to confirm this hope, from time to time, by various revelations, gradually unfolding his gracious deſigns: till, by the coming of our bleſſed Lord, the whole purpoſe of his goodneſs was opened; as far as it is proper, that mortals ſhould be acquainted with it.

From theſe revelations, contained in the Bible, we learn, that repentance alone, even the completeſt, would not be ſufficient to reinſtate us fully in God's favour; much leſs the poor endeavours towards it, which we of ourſelves are capable of uſing: but that our pardon and ſalvation depend on the compaſſionate interceſſion of a Mediator appointed by our heavenly Father: that a perſon, who ſhould deliver mankind from the bitter fruits of their tranſgreſſions, had in general been

promiſed, and the promiſe been believed, from the earlieſt ages; and more particular notices of him gradually imparted to the ſucceſſive generations of the choſen people: that at length, in the ſeaſon which infinite Wiſdom ſaw to be fitteſt, he appeared on earth, in the character of the only begotten Son of God; taught his followers the precepts, and ſet them the example, of perfect piety and virtue; and after bearing cheerfully, for this purpoſe, all the inconveniences of mortal life, ſubmitted to ſuffer a cruel death from wicked men, provoked by the perfections, which they ought to have adored: that this voluntary ſacrifice of himſelf, the Almighty was pleaſed to accept from him, whoſe divine nature, united to the human, gave it unſpeakable value, as a reaſon for entering into a covenant of mercy with all thoſe, who ſhould be influenced, by faith in his doctrines, to obey his laws: that ſtill, neither our obedience, nor our faith itſelf, is at all meritorious, or in any degree the cauſe of our acceptance; for they are both of them God's gift; and they are both, through our fault, very imperfect: but that yet thankful belief in Chriſt, as our Saviour from the power and the puniſhment of ſin, *working by love** to our Maker, our Redeemer, our Sanctifier, our fellow-creatures, is appointed the condition of our obtaining, and the inſtrument of our receiving, pardon.

The reaſons of this appointment *we ſee, as through a glaſs darkly* †: yet enough of them to convince us of its being *the wiſdom of God*, though *in a myſtery* ‡. With reſpect to ourſelves, it hath the moſt powerful tendency to inſpire us with humility, gratitude and diligence. With reſpect to the bleſſed Jeſus, it was a fit reward for what he had done and ſuffered, to take thoſe into favour again, for whom he had intereſted himſelf with ſuch inexpreſſible goodneſs. And with reſpect to God, it was a ſtrong demonſtration of his concern for the glory of his attributes, and the honour of his government, that he would not be reconciled to ſinners on any other terms, than ſuch an interpoſition of ſuch a perſon in their behalf: which yet, ſince he himſelf provided, as well as accepted, his kindneſs to us is no leſs, than if he pardoned us without it. Thus then did *mercy and truth meet together, righteouſneſs and peace*

* Gal. v. 6. † 1 Cor. xiii. 12. ‡ 1 Cor. ii. 7.

*peace kiſs each other**; and God ſhow himſelf *juſt, and* yet *the juſtifier of them which believe in Jeſus* †.

But then we muſt always remember, that none will be forgiven and made happy by the means of Chriſt, but they who are reformed and made holy by his means: that his ſacrifice is not to ſtand inſtead of our repentance and amendment; but is the conſideration which induces God firſt to work in us pious diſpoſitions, then to accept us, if we cultivate and exert them faithfully.

Perhaps the benefit of this ſacrifice may extend, in a very valuable, though inferior degree, even to thoſe who have had little or no knowledge of him who offered it. But in ſuch queſtions we have no concern. Our buſineſs is to take care that it may extend to us, by embracing, with an active as well as joyful faith, the gracious tenders of the goſpel diſpenſation.

Indeed the firſt advantage, that we have from it, is before we are capable of knowing our happineſs, at the time of our baptiſm. For baptiſm reſtores the infants of believing parents, as will be proved hereafter, in explaining it, to that aſſurance of immortal life, which our firſt parents loſt, and we by conſequence. But when adminiſtered to perſons of riper years, as it conveys a further privilege, the pardon of their former actual ſins, it alſo requires a ſuitable condition, the exerciſe of an actual faith, ſuch as will produce future obedience. And as infants are baptized only on preſumption of their coming to have this faith in due time; ſo, if they live, and refuſe to be inſtructed in it, or deſpiſe it, their baptiſm will avail them nothing. For it is a covenant: at firſt indeed made for us; but to be afterwards acknowledged and ratified by us, as it is in confirmation. And in this covenant we engage, on our part, to keep ourſelves, with an honeſt care, free from ſin: and God engages, on his, to conſider us, (not becauſe of our care, tho' on condition of it, but for the ſake of Chriſt,) as free from guilt; notwithſtanding ſuch infirmities and failings as may overtake well-meaning perſons. He will not look on theſe as breaches of his covenant, but readily paſs them over; provided we make a general confeſſion of them in our daily prayers, and ſtrive againſt them with a reaſonable diligence. For

* Pſal. lxxxv. 10. † Rom. iii. 26.

ſuch things we cannot expect to avoid entirely: but greater offences we may. And therefore, if we fall into any habitual wickedneſs, or any ſingle act of groſs and deliberate ſin; we forfeit the happineſs, to which our baptiſm intitles us: and if we continue impenitent, the more privileges we have enjoyed, the more ſeverely we ſhall be puniſhed. For *to whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall much be required* *.

But if God allows us time; and we make uſe of it, not only to be ſorry for having lived ill, for this alone is not goſpel penitence; but to be ſorry from a principle of conſcience; and to ſhow of what ſort our ſorrow is, by living well afterwards, in all thoſe reſpects, in which we have been faulty, we become intitled again to the Divine favour. For though the ſcripture declares it *impoſſible to renew* ſome ſinners to *repentance* †: yet if this be taken ſtrictly, it can mean only *blaſphemers againſt the Holy Ghoſt* ‡. Beſides, *impoſſible*, in all languages, often ſignifies no more than extremely difficult: and *with God all things are poſſible* §. Experience proves, that great numbers are *renewed to repentance*; and that they ſhall not be forgiven, when they repent, is no where ſaid. It is true, *there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin* ||, no other method of ſalvation, than that, to which they have loſt their claim. But ſtill, if they humbly apply for a freſh intereſt in it; ſince the apoſtle directs all Chriſtians to *reſtore ſuch* to their communion, as brethren, *in the ſpirit of meekneſs* ¶; there can be no doubt, but God will receive them, as a Father, with pity, and mercy. Indeed, the words of St John alone would be ſufficient to baniſh all deſpondency from the breaſt of every Chriſtian penitent. *My little children, theſe things I write unto you, that ye ſin not. But if any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt, the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our ſins* **.

You ſee then the ineſtimable goodneſs of God, in providing means, by which we not only ſhall be pardoned, but have the comfort of knowing beforehand, that we ſhall. But then you ſee alſo the only terms, on which we are to expect it. And theſe are, not that we live on in a circle of ſinning and repenting; not that we abſtain from ſome ſins, and indulge others: but that we ſo repent of all our ſins, as not wilfully to ſin again.

* Luke xii. 48. † Heb. vi. 4, 6 ‡ Matth. xii. 31.
§ Mat. xix. 26. || Heb. x. 26. ¶ Gal. vi. 1. ** 1 John ii. 1, 2.

gain. And till we are arrived at this, we muſt never think ourſelves in a ſafe condition. For, as on the one hand, *if the wicked man turn from his wickedneſs, he ſhall live**; ſo on the other, *if the righteous man turn from his righteouſneſs he ſhall die*†. *Bleſſed are they, whoſe tranſgreſſion is forgiven, and whoſe ſin is covered. Bleſſed are they, to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whoſe ſpirit there is no guile* ‡.

* Ezek. xviii. 21, 27. † Ezek. xxiv. ‡ Pſal. xxxii. 1, 2.

LECTURE XVI.

CREED.

Articles XI, XII. Part I.—*The reſurrection of the body, and the life everlaſting.*

THE Reſurrection of the body and life everlaſting being the conſequences of the preceding article, the forgiveneſs of ſins, our belief of that comfortable truth leads us naturally to believe theſe alſo. And as they complete the whole of what we are concerned to know; ſo here the profeſſion of our faith happily concludes, having brought us to the *end of our faith, the ſalvation of our ſouls**.

But, tho' this part of our Creed expreſſes only two things; yet it implies two more: and ſo comprehends the four following particulars:

I. That the ſouls of all men continue after death.

II. That their bodies ſhall at the laſt day be raiſed up, and reunited to them.

III. That both ſouls and bodies of good perſons ſhall enjoy everlaſting happineſs.

IV. That

* 1 Pet. i. 9.

IV. That thoſe of the wicked ſhall undergo everlaſting puniſhment.

I. That the ſouls of all men continue after death. We are every one of us capable of perceiving and thinking, judging and reſolving, loving and hating, hoping and fearing, rejoicing and grieving. That part of us, which doth theſe things, we call the mind or ſoul. Now plainly this is not the body. Neither our limbs, nor our trunk, nor even our head, is what underſtands, and reaſons, and wills, and likes or diſlikes: but ſomething, that hath its abode within the head *, and is unſeen. A little conſideration will make any of you ſenſible of this. Then further: Our bodies increaſe, from an unconceivable ſmallneſs to a very large bulk, and waſte away again; and are changing, each part of them, more or leſs, every day. Our ſouls, we know, continue all the while the ſame. Our limbs may be cut off one after another, and periſh: yet the ſoul not be impaired by it in the leaſt. All feeling and motion may be loſt almoſt throughout the body, as in the caſe of an univerſal palſy: yet the ſoul have loſt nothing. And tho' ſome diſeaſes do indeed diſorder the mind; there is no appearance, that any have a tendency to deſtroy it. On the contrary, the greateſt diſorders of the underſtanding are often accompanied with firm health and ſtrength of body: and the moſt fatal diſtempers of the body are attended, to the very moment of death, with all poſſible vigour and liveline ſs of underſtanding. Since therefore theſe two are plainly different things; though we knew no further, there would be no reaſon to conclude, that one of them dies, becauſe the other doth. But ſince we do know further, that it can ſurvive ſo many changes of the other; this alone affords a fair probability, that it may ſurvive the great change of death. Indeed, whatever is once in being, we are to ſuppoſe continues in being, till the contrary appears. Now the body, we perceive, becomes at death inſenſible, and corrupts. But to imagine the ſame thing of the ſoul, in which we perceive no change at that time, would be almoſt as groundleſs, as if having frequently heard the muſic of an organ, but never ſeen the perſon that played on it, we ſhould ſuppoſe him dead, on finding the inſtrument incapable

* In quo igitur loco eſt (mens)? Credo equidem in capite: & cur credam, adferre poſſum. Cic. Tuſc. Diſp. l. i. c. 29.

incapable of playing any more. For the body is an inſtrument adapted to the ſoul. The latter is our proper Self: the former is but ſomething joined to us for a time. And though, during that time, the connection is very cloſe; yet nothing hinders, but we may be as well after the ſeparation of our ſoul from our preſent body, as we were before, if not better.

Then conſider further: When the body dies, only the preſent compoſition and frame of it is diſſolved, and falls in pieces: not the leaſt ſingle particle, of all that make it up, returns to nothing; or can do, unleſs God, who gave it being, thinks fit to take that being away. Now we have no reaſon to imagine the ſoul made up of parts, though the body is. On the contrary, ſo far as the acuteſt reaſoners are able to judge, what perceives and wills muſt be one uncompounded ſubſtance. And not being compounded, it cannot be diſſolved, and therefore probably cannot die *.

God indeed may put an end to it, when he pleaſes. But ſince he hath made it of a nature to laſt for ever, we cannot well conceive, that he will deſtroy it after ſo ſhort a ſpace, as that of this life: eſpecially conſidering, that he hath planted in our breaſts an earneſt deſire of immortality, and a horror at the thought of ceaſing to be. It is true, we dread alſo the death of our bodies, and yet we own they muſt die: but then we believe, that they were not at firſt intended to die: and that they ſhall live again wonderfully improved. God hath in no caſe given us natural diſpoſitions and hopes, which he purpoſed at the ſame time to diſappoint: much leſs, when they are ſuch, that the wiſeſt and beſt men feel the moſt of them, and are made ſtill wiſer and better by them.

Beſides, there are plainly in our ſouls capacities for vaſtly higher improvements, both in knowledge and goodneſs, than any one arrives at in this life. The beſt inclined, and moſt induſtrious, undeniably have not near time enough to become what they could be. And is it likely, that beings qualified for doing ſo much ſhould have ſo little opportunity for it; and ſink into nothing, without ever attaining their proper maturity and perfection? But further: Not to urge, that happineſs here is very unequally divided between perſons equally intitled to it; which yet is hard to reconcile with God's impartial

* See Cic. Tuſc. Diſp. l. 29.

tial bounty: it hath been already obſerved, in ſpeaking of the judgment to come, that though, in general, the courſe of things in this world doth bear witneſs to God's love of virtue, and hatred of ſin; yet, in multitudes of particular caſes, nothing of this kind appears. Not only good perſons often undergo, in common with others, the largeſt ſhares of evil in life; and bad perſons enjoy, in common with others, the higheſt degrees of proſperity in it: but the former are frequently ſufferers, and ſometimes even to death, for the very ſake of their duty; and the latter gain every ſort of worldly advantages by the very means of their wickedneſs. Yet evidently there is a difference between right behaviour and wrong: and God muſt ſee this difference: and his will muſt be, that mankind ſhould obſerve it: and accordingly we feel ourſelves inwardly bound ſo to do. Now is it poſſible, that a Being of perfect juſtice and holineſs, of infinite wiſdom and power, ſhould have ordered things ſo, that obeying him and our own conſciences ſhould ever make us miſerable, and diſobeying them prove beneficial to us, on the whole? We cannot ſurely imagine, that he will permit any one ſuch caſe to happen. And therefore, ſince in this world ſuch caſes do happen; this world is not our final ſtate: but another will come after it, in which every one ſhall be recompenſed according to his works. Without this belief, religion and virtue would often want ſufficient motives: with it they never can; and therefore this belief is true.

Strongly as theſe arguments prove the doctrine of a life after death; yet it receives a conſiderable addition of ſtrength from the univerſal agreement of all mankind in it, with but few exceptions, from the very beginning. Of the earlieſt ages indeed we have only ſhort accounts: yet enough to judge, what their notions of this point were. What could they be indeed, when they knew, that Abel, with whom God declared himſelf pleaſed, was murdered by his brother for that very reaſon? Surely his brother's hatred did not do him more harm, than God's love of him did him good. That would be thinking lowly indeed of the Almighty. And therefore, ſince plainly he had not the benefit of his piety here, there muſt be another place, in which he received it. Again, when *Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him* *: could

* Gen. v. 24.

this peculiar favour be only depriving him, before his natural time, of the enjoyments of the preſent ſtate? Muſt it not be admitting him to thoſe of a future one? When God called himſelf, in a diſtinguiſhed ſenſe, *the God of Abraham* and the patriarchs, what had they enjoyed in this life, anſwerable to ſo extraordinary a manner of ſpeaking? Many, in all likelihood, both equalled and exceeded them in worldly ſatisfaction: But *therefore*, as the epiſtle to the Hebrews teaches, *God was not aſhamed to be called their God, becauſe he had prepared for them a* heavenly *city*. When *Jacob confeſſed himſelf a pilgrim and ſtranger on earth, he* plainly *declared*, as the ſame epiſtle obſerves, that *he deſired a better country** for his home. Again, when mourning for the ſuppoſed death of his ſon Joſeph, he ſaith, he *will go down to him*: we tranſlate the next word wrongly, *into the grave* †, as if he meant to have his body laid by him: that could not be; for he thought him devoured by wild beaſts: it means, into the inviſible ſtate, the ſtate of departed ſouls. And in this ſenſe it is ſaid of ſeveral of the patriarchs, that *they were gathered unto their people* ‡, and of *all that generation*, which lived with Joſhua, that they *were gathered unto their fathers* §.

In the time of Moſes we find, that even the heathens had a ſtrong notion of another life. For they had built a ſuperſtitious practice upon it, of ſeeking to the dead ||, and enquiring of them concerning things to come. A fooliſh and wicked cuſtom indeed: but however, it ſhows the belief was deeply rooted in them. And though future recompences were not, directly and expreſsly, either promiſed to good perſons, or threatened to bad, in the law of Moſes: yet that might be, not becauſe they were unknown, but becauſe God thought them ſufficiently known; and for reaſons of unſearchable wiſdom, did not think proper, that Moſes ſhould make any conſiderable addition to that knowledge: of which there was the leſs occaſion, as temporal rewards and puniſhments were more equally adminiſtered by Providence amongſt the Jews, than any other people. Beſides, a life to come is not mentioned in the laws of our own nation neither: though we know, they were made by ſuch, as profeſſed firmly to believe it. And

* Heb. xi. 13—16. † Gen. xxxvii. 35. ‡ Gen. xxv. 8. xxxv. 29. xlix. 29. § Judg. ii. 10. || Deut. xviii. 9,—12.

the reaſon is, partly that national laws are more immediately deſigned to procure men peace and proſperity on earth, than happineſs in heaven: and partly alſo, that they propoſe ſuch encouragements, as they are able to inflict; which are thoſe of this world only. Moſes indeed went beyond the ſanctions, which are in man's power: and aſſured the Jews of God's bleſſings on their obedience, and curſes on their diſobedience. But as, in ſo doing, he ſpoke, not ſo much to ſingle perſons conſidered ſingly, as to the whole people in a body; theſe bleſſings and curſes could be only, what they were, thoſe of the preſent life: becauſe the diviſion of mankind into nations will ſubſiſt no longer; and therefore national good or evil can be enjoyed or ſuffered only here. But ſtill, ſince it is evident, through the whole of his law, that the Jews had the moſt ſerious belief of a juſt Providence; and alſo from the above-mentioned proofs, that they believed a future ſtate; ſurely they muſt believe in general, that this Providence would be ſo exerted in that ſtate, as to reward the good, and puniſh the wicked. More and ſtronger evidences of this will be given under the ſecond particular, *the reſurrection of the body.*

At preſent I ſhall go on to obſerve further, that not only the Jews, but all the nations of the world, whether learned or unlearned, whether known in former times or diſcovered of later times, appear to have been perſuaded, that the ſouls of men continue after death. Now this ſo univerſal agreement muſt ſurely have ariſen from an inward principal of nature, dictating to all perſons that they are deſigned for a future exiſtence; and that as they are plainly creatures accountable for their actions, yet often do not account here, they muſt expect to do it hereafter. Or ſhould the notion be ſuppoſed to have its origin from tradition; that tradition muſt have been derived from what God himſelf had taught the firſt of men: elſe it had never reached to all men: and it muſt have found ſome powerful confirmation in the minds and hearts of men: elſe in ſo great a length of time, amidſt ſo many changes of human circumſtances, it muſt have been univerſally worn out and forgotten.

Indeed, before our Saviour's days, length of time, and folly, and wickedneſs, had every where obſcured and darkened this great truth, by fabulous additions and abſurd alterations: which hindered the good influence of it on ſome perſons, and

diſcredited

diſcredited the belief of it with others. And had there been none of theſe obſtacles thrown in their way; though reaſon and conſcience teach the doctrine of a future ſtate; yet by the generality of men, reaſon is little exerciſed, and conſcience little conſulted, in relation to unwelcome truths. And tho' the Old Teſtament gave ſome further intimations of it; yet theſe were neither very clear and explicite, nor known by the greateſt part of the world. No wonder then if their concluſions, concerning a matter ſo intirely out of ſight, were often doubtful, and often falſe: and thus they were miſled in a ſubject of the greateſt importance to them of all others. It is therefore one ineſtimable benefit of the Chriſtian revelation, that our bleſſed Lord hath thoroughly removed the preceding uncertainties and errors; and *brought life and immortality to* perfect *light through the goſpel* *: not only confirming by divine authority whatever had been rationally taught before; but adding, by the ſame authority, ſeveral intereſting particulars, which human faculties could not diſcover: and which partly have been mentioned to you, in diſcourſing on the general judgment; and partly will be, in what I ſhall further ſay under the heads now propoſed.

All that remains to be ſaid under the firſt, is, That neither the full reward of good perſons deceaſed is as yet beſtowed on them, nor the full puniſhment of the wicked as yet inflicted; theſe things being to follow the general reſurrection: but that ſtill, ſince our Saviour deſcribes the ſoul of Lazarus, as *carried by angels into Abraham's boſom*, and there *comforted* †; ſince he promiſed the penitent thief, that he ſhould *be that day with him in paradiſe* ‡; and St Paul ſpeaks of being *preſent with Chriſt*, as the immediate conſequence of death, and *far better* § than this life: therefore the ſtate of thoſe, *who die in the Lord*, is now a ſtate, not of inſenſibility, but happineſs: wherein they *are bleſſed*, in *reſting from their labours* ||; and doubtleſs *rejoice, with joy unſpeakable and full of glory* ¶, in the proſpect of that compleater felicity, which the righteous Judge of all will hereafter give them.

For as to the pretence of a purgatory, where the greateſt part of good perſons are to ſuffer grievous temporal puniſh-

* 2 Tim. i. 10. † Luke xvi. 22, 25. ‡ Luke xxiii. 43.
§ 2 Cor. v. 8. Phil. i. 23. || Rev. xiv. 13 ¶ 1 Pet. i. 8.

ments, after death, for their ſins, though the eternal puniſhment is remitted: it hath no ground in the leaſt. Our Saviour's ſaying, "that the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven in this world, or that which is to come*," is merely ſaying, it ſhall not be forgiven at all, but puniſhed both here and hereafter. "The priſon, out of which," he ſaith, the perſon, who agrees not with his brother, "ſhall not come, till he hath paid the laſt farthing †;" is either a literal priſon of this world, or the priſon of hell in the next, out of which the contentious and uncharitable ſhall never come, for they can never pay the laſt farthing. "The ſpirits in priſon," to whom St Peter, ſaith, "Chriſt by his Spirit preached," he ſaith alſo, were "the diſobedient in the days of Noah ‡," with whom "his Spirit ſtrove §," whilſt they were on this earth: and who for their diſobedience were ſent, not to purgatory, but to a worſe confinement. When St Paul bids men "take heed how they build on the foundation" of Chriſtianity; adding, that the "fire ſhall try every man's work; and if any man's work ſhall be burnt, he ſhall ſuffer loſs; but ſtill ſhall be ſaved, yet ſo as by fire ‖:" he means, that perſons muſt not mix doctrines of their own invention with the goſpel of Chriſt, which in this inſtance, amongſt others, thoſe of the church of Rome have done: for when "the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire ¶," to judge the world, ſuch notions will not ſtand the trial; they that hold them will be loſers by them; and though ſtill they may be ſaved, it will be with difficulty and danger: as a perſon eſcapes, when his houſe is burning. When, laſtly, many of the ancient Chriſtians prayed for the dead; beſides that they had no warrant for ſo doing, it was only for the completion of their happineſs, whom they apprehended to be already in paradiſe: it was for the apoſtles, ſaints, and martyrs; for the bleſſed virgin herſelf: whom they certainly did not think to be in purgatory. And obſerve, if they prayed for them, they did not pray to them. Purgatory then is nothing, but an imaginary place, invented by men, to give bad perſons hope, and good perſons dread of being put into it; that they may get what they can from both, by pretending

* Mat. xii. 31, 32. † Mat. v. 26. ‡ 1 Pet. iii. 18,—20.
§ Gen. vi. 3. ‖ 1 Cor. iii. 10,—15. ¶ 2 Theſſ. i. 7.

pretending to deliver them out of it again. Fear not therefore such vain terrors. "The souls of the righteous are in the hands of the Lord: and there shall no torment touch them *."

Those of the wicked, on the contrary, as they are to be hereafter with the devils, we may justly believe are, like them, now *delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgement* †: and though the worst of their sufferings shall not begin, till the day of judgment comes; yet are they represented by our Saviour, as being, instantly after death, in a place, where they are *tormented* ‡: and undoubtedly, the loss of their past pleasures and gains, remorse for their past follies and crimes, despair of pardon, and the *fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation, which shall devour them* §; cannot but make their intermediate state intensely miserable: and what then will their final one be! God grant, that thinking frequently and seriously of these awful subjects, *we may know* and consider, *in this our day, the things that belong to our peace*, before *they are* for ever *hid from our eyes* ||.

* Wisd. iii. 1. † 2 Pet. ii. 4. ‡ Luke xvi. 25.
§ Heb. x. 27. || Luke xix. 42.

LECTURE XVII.

CREED.

Articles XI, XII. Part II.—*The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.*

UNDER the two last Articles of the Creed, as I have already observed to you, are comprehended four points of doctrine:

I. That

I. That the ſouls of all men continue after death.

II. That their bodies ſhall at the laſt day be raiſed up, and reunited to them.

III. That both ſouls and bodies of good perſons ſhall enjoy everlaſting happineſs.

IV. That thoſe of the wicked ſhall undergo everlaſting puniſhment.

The firſt of theſe being the foundation of the reſt; I choſe to enlarge on the proof and explanation of it. Now I proceed to ſhow,

II. That the bodies of all men ſhall be raiſed up again, and reunited to their ſouls. This reaſon alone cannot prove: and accordingly the heathens were ignorant of it: but it carries with it no contradiction to reaſon in the leaſt. For God is infinite, both in power and knowledge: and it is unqueſtionably as poſſible to bring together and enliven the ſcattered parts of our body again, as it was to make them out of nothing, and give them life, at firſt. And therefore, ſince we muſt acknowledge the original formation of our bodies to have been of God, we have abundant cauſe to be aſſured, that he can, after death, form them anew, whenever he pleaſes. And that this will be done, was probably implied in that general promiſe, made to our firſt parents, that *the Seed of the Woman*, our bleſſed Lord, *ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head* *; deſtroy his power: and conſequently take away the curſe, under which he had brought mankind. For as part of that curſe conſiſts in the death of the body, it cannot be completely taken away, but by the reſurrection of the body. In after-times, Abraham, we find, had ſo ſtrong belief of the poſſibility of this article, that he was willing, on the Divine command, to ſacrifice his ſon: *reaſoning*, as the epiſtle to the Hebrews teaches us, *that God was able to raiſe him up, even from the dead* †. And indeed he could not have been induced to this, by any other reaſoning. God had promiſed him, that by his ſon Iſaac he ſhould have a numerous poſterity: and this promiſe he firmly believed. Now he muſt know, it could never be fulfilled, if Iſaac was to be ſacrificed, but by his riſing again: and therefore he muſt be perſuaded, that he would riſe again for that purpoſe. On proceeding ſomewhat further in the ſacred hiſtory,

* Gen. iii. 15. † Heb. xi. 19.

tory, we find Job expreſſing himſelf on this head, if we at all underſtand his words, in very ſtrong terms: "I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth. And though, after my ſkin, this body be deſtroyed *; yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God †." Again, when Elijah was taken up alive into heaven, this muſt ſurely give an expectation, that the body, as well as the ſoul, was to partake of future happineſs. And when the ſeveral perſons, mentioned in the Old Teſtament, were raiſed up to life in this world, it could not but increaſe the probability of a general reſurrection in the next. Then in the book of Daniel we have an expreſs declaration, that a time ſhould come, when "they who ſlept in the duſt of the earth, ſhould awake: ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame, and everlaſting contempt ‡." And indeed, when thoſe, whom we commonly call the three children, in the former part of that book, tell the king, that even though it were not the pleaſure of God to deliver them from the fiery furnace, yet "would they not ſerve his gods §;" on what other principle could they ſo rationally, or did they ſo probably ſay this, as on that, which the brethren in the book of Maccabees explicitely profeſs? There, one of them, ſtretching forth his hands to the torment, ſaith, "Theſe I had from Heaven: and for his laws I deſpiſe them; and from him I hope to receive them again." Another, "It is good being put to death by men, to look for hope from God, to be raiſed up again by him." And laſtly, the mother declares to her children: "I neither gave you birth, nor life; nor was it I, that formed your members: but doubtleſs the Creator of the world, who formed the generation of man, and found out the beginning of all things, will alſo of his mercy give you breath and life again; as you now regard not yourſelves for his laws ſake ‖." In the later times indeed of the Jewiſh church, not a few denied this doctrine: but much the greater number held it: allowing, as St Paul acquainted Felix, "that there ſhall be a reſurrection, both of the juſt and unjuſt ¶."

Yet ſtill, the full confirmation of it was reſerved for our Saviour to give: who, having in his life-time raiſed up three ſeveral perſons, as you may read at large in the Evangeliſts, raiſed

* So I think the original ſhould be tranſlated. † Job xix. 25, 26.

‡ Dan. xii. 2. § Dan. iii. 17, 18. ‖ 2 Mac. vii. 10—23. ¶ Acts xxiv. 15.

raiſed up himſelf from the dead, in the laſt place; to afford us the ſtrongeſt demonſtration poſſible, that he both can and will raiſe us all at the day of judgment.

This great event will doubtleſs, when it comes to paſs, exhibit to the whole univerſe an aſtoniſhing evidence of the power and the truth of God: who may eaſily have many reaſons for reſtoring our bodies, which we apprehend not; beſides thoſe, which in ſome meaſure we do apprehend: that the ſoul of man being originally, and in the ſtate of innocence, united to a body, is probably capable of completer perception and action, and conſequently of higher degrees of reward or puniſhment, in that ſtate, than a ſeparate one, or at leaſt will be ſo, with ſuch a body, as in the next life ſhall be allotted to it: and likewiſe, that our belief of enjoying happineſs, or ſuffering miſery, in both parts of our frame hereafter, muſt naturally incline us to preſerve the purity of both here: abſtaining, or "cleanſing ourſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, and perfecting holineſs in the fear of God *."

The truth and reaſonableneſs of the doctrine being thus eſtabliſhed; it ought to be no objection, that ſeveral particulars relating to it exceed our comprehenſion. "How the dead are raiſed," it is ſufficient that God knows; and by no means wonderful that we do not: for we ſcarce know, how any one part of the courſe of nature is carried on. And as to the inquiry, that follows this in St Paul, "With what bodies do they come†?" we are taught, they ſhall be ſo far the ſame bodies, that every one ſhall have properly his own, and be truly the ſame perſon he was before: but ſo far different, that thoſe of good perſons will be ſubject to none of the ſufferings, none of the infirmities, none of the neceſſities of this life. For, to uſe the ſame Apoſtle's words, "What is ſown in corruption, ſhall be raiſed in incorruption: what is ſown in diſhonour, ſhall be raiſed in glory; what is ſown a natural body, ſhall be raiſed a ſpiritual body ‡." But the particular nature of ſpiritual bodies, or the diſtinction that ſhall be made in them, between the more eminent in goodneſs and their inferiors, "as one ſtar differeth from another ſtar in glory §;" the ſe things we are not qualified, in our preſent ſtate, to underſtand. And it is ſome degree of weakneſs even to aſk queſtions about them: but

* 2 Cor. vii. 1. † 1 Cor. xv. 35. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 42,—44. § Ibid. 41.

but would be much greater to attempt giving anſwers. I ſhall therefore only add, that ſuch of the good, as *are* found *alive at the coming of the Lord**, *ſhall not ſleep*, or die, and therefore cannot riſe again; but *ſhall be changed*† into the ſame likeneſs with thoſe who do: as the ſcripture hath plainly taught us. But what the appearance and condition of the bodies of wicked perſons will be at the reſurrection, it hath not, I think afforded us the leaſt knowledge, further than is implied in the deſcription of their puniſhment, of which I ſhall treat before I conclude: and let us be ſo wiſe, as to dread the terrors, that are thus concealed from us.

Concerning the general judgment, which is to come immediately after the reſurrection, I have ſpoken under the article of the Creed which relates to it: and therefore proceed now to the conſequences of that judgment, by ſhowing you,

III. That both the ſouls and bodies of the pious and virtuous will enjoy *everlaſting life*: that is, in their caſe, happineſs. For a happy life being the only one, that is a bleſſing: life in ſcripture, very commonly ſignifies felicity; and death, miſery.

Now, that good perſons will, ſooner or later, be recompenſed by a good God, is an undoubted truth. But then as no one is perfectly good, and many have been very bad: there is room for much doubt, who hath a right to apply this comfort to himſelf, and who not. But what reaſon might be at a loſs to determine, the ſcripture hath cleared up; and intitled all to pardon and reward, who truly repent of their ſins; and ſincerely, though not without mixtures of human frailty, obey God, from a principle of faith in Chriſt, and in reliance on the grace of the Holy Ghoſt. Still, after this, reaſon unaſſiſted can only gueſs, of what nature, of what degree, of what duration, this reward will be. And here once more revelation interpoſes, and moſt happily enlightens us. "For eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit ‡." Not that any exact account is given us of the particulars, that ſhall make up our future bliſs: for in all probability we are

* 1 Theſſ. iv. 15. † 1 Cor. xv. 51. ‡ 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

not capable of receiving ſuch a one: our preſent faculties are not fitted for it.

But however, in general, our Saviour tells us, we ſhall be "as the angels of God in heaven*." Nay, his beloved diſciple St John tells us, that, though "it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be, this we know, that when God ſhall appear we ſhall be like him†." Now to be like God implies, in few words, every thing deſirable, that ever ſo many words can expreſs. Further yet, a voice from heaven proclaims, in the Revelation, that we ſhall be free in that ſtate, from every thing that is uneaſy: for "God ſhall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, nor ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain‡." And multitudes of ſcriptures aſſure us, that we ſhall enjoy every thing, that is delightful: for they uſe the nobleſt and ſtrongeſt images, of all that in this world is great and ſplendid, and capable of giving the moſt exalted and moſt refined ſatisfactions, to repreſent that happineſs figuratively, which cannot be literally deſcribed.

Our vile bodies ſhall be *faſhioned like unto the glorious body*§ of our bleſſed Lord: which, in his temporary transfiguration here on earth, *ſhone as the ſun; and his raiment was white as the light*||. They ſhall be freed from all tendency to decay or diſorder; and become unwearied inſtruments for every excellent purpoſe, to that better part, which they uſed to *preſs down*¶. They ſhall, doubtleſs, alſo have ſuch gratifications allotted to them, as will ſuit, though not their preſent groſs nature, yet their future ſpiritual condition: and be adorned with all the dignity and beauty, that ought naturally to accompany abſolute innocence, univerſal love, divine favour, and heavenly joy.

Then for our minds, when once *the ſpirits of juſt men* are *made perfect**, as they ſhall be, in every thing worthy and amiable: what pleaſure muſt we take in meeting again the dear objects of our former affections, now become infinitely more deſerving of them; in converſing with all the great and good perſons that ever were, concerning the various ſcenes of this preſent world, and the bleſſed exchange that we have made of it

* Mat. xxii. 30. † 1 John iii. 2. ‡ Rev. xxi. 4. § Phil. iii. 21.
|| Mat. xvii. 2. ¶ Wiſ. ix. 15. * Heb. xii. 23.

it for better: in learning from them, and that *innumerable company of angels* *, which miniſter to God's will, continually new inſtruction, concerning all his works of nature, providence and grace! What ſurpriſing advances muſt we make by theſe means in moſt pleaſing knowledge: what rapturous engagements in mutual friendſhip! Nor can it be queſtioned, but ſuch employments too, however beyond our reach to gueſs at them now, will be aſſigned to each perſon, as ſhall produce him high honour, and equal happineſs. But above all, happineſs will be that of inceſſantly ſeeing and loving God, and feeling that we are beloved by him. Thus *ſhall we be abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of his houſe, and made to drink of the river of his pleaſures: for with him is the fountain of life* †, *in his preſence is fulneſs of joy, and at his right hand there are pleaſures for evermore* ‡. Were we to have a proſpect, that our felicity would end; the more exquiſite our enjoyments were, the more melancholy our reflections might be. But in the word of God we find repeated aſſurances, that *the righteous ſhall go into life eternal* §; that *the inheritance reſerved in heaven for us, is incorruptible, and fadeth not away* ‖. Nay, indeed, as there will always be room for finite creatures, to advance without end towards him, who is infinite; and as every improvement in perfection muſt be of itſelf a freſh delight, and will certainly be rewarded by our Maker with freſh bounties, we have reaſon to conclude, that our happineſs, far from ever ending, will be continually increaſing to all eternity.

It is true, the greateſt, the ableſt, the beſt of us merit no ſuch bleſſedneſs: far from it. But ſtill, what *God only wiſe* ¶ hath not thought too much to promiſe, the meaneſt and moſt ignorant may humbly expect. They are as capable as others of love and duty to him, good-will to their fellow-creatures, and moral government of themſelves. Now, theſe are the things which he values; the true ſeeds of future bliſs: and whoever cultivates them faithfully, will be ſure to reap their fruit, each in proportion to his improvement. And thus every one ſhall be happy to the height of his capacity: neither deſpiſing thoſe below him, nor envying thoſe above him. But, though we ought to dwell upon this moſt delightful and uſe-

* Heb. xii. 22. † Pſal. xxxvi 8, 9. ‡ Pſal. xvi. 11.
§ Mat. xxv. 46. Rom. ii. 7. ‖ 1 Pet. i. 4. ¶ Rom. xvi. 27. 1 Tim. i. 17. Jude, verſe 25.

ful ſubject, in our thoughts, much more than we do, we muſt now turn our eyes from it to a very different view, ſet before us.

IV. That the ſouls and bodies of the wicked ſhall undergo everlaſting puniſhment.

This, it muſt be owned, is not explicitely mentioned in the Creed. And God had rather, that we ſhould be moved to obey him by love, and hope of his favour, than by fear of his anger. But both motives are implied in this article. For though life in ſcripture more eſpecially means happineſs; yet its original ſenſe is only continuance in being, whether happy or miſerable: and as the wicked are raiſed, and judged in order to ſuffer what they have deſerved, ſo muſt they live afterwards for the ſame purpoſe.

That diſobedience to God can never end well, is the plaineſt truth in the world: for nothing is hid from his knowledge, nothing can eſcape his power: he is holy as well as good; beſides that goodneſs itſelf requires, the incorrigible bad to be made examples, for the ſake of deterring others. Yet leſt, after all, they ſhould promiſe themſelves that he will ſpare them, he hath ſolemnly and repeatedly declared, that he will not. In this world however, many ſuch come off, to all appearance, with impunity; committing much evil, and enjoying much good. And they who are puniſhed, are often but ſlightly puniſhed; and ſeldom according to the degree of their crimes: for the deliberate and artful ſinners, who are the worſt, uſually fare beſt here below. As ſure therefore as God is juſt and true, another ſtate remains, in which all this will be ſet right.

What ſufferings, in particular, the Divine juſtice will then inflict on unpardoned ſinners, reaſon cannot determine: and revelation hath given us only general and figurative deſcriptions of them; but ſuch deſcriptions, as are beyond all things terrible: and I ſhall lay them before you, not in my own words, but thoſe of holy writ. The Judge of all ſhall ſay unto them, *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels* *. There *they ſhall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out, without mixture, into the cup of his indignation, and ſhall be tormented with fire and brimſtone; and the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever*

* Matth. xxv. 14.

ver, and they have no reſt, day nor night *: *their worm ſhall not die, neither ſhall their fire be quenched* †.

How ſevere ſoever theſe denunciations may appear to us, aſſuredly the threatenings of God will not be vain terrors. We are partial and incompetent judges in our own caſe: prone to flatter and deceive ourſelves. But he knows exactly what ſin deſerves, and what the honour of his government requires: from his declarations therefore we are to learn our fate. *He hath ſet before us life and death: and whether we like, ſhall be given us* ‡. If therefore the latter be our wilful choice, in which we obſtinately perſiſt; what wonder if we are left to it? For ſin and miſery muſt and will be companions for ever. Not that in any caſe, the anger of God ſhall prevail over his juſtice: but the degree of each perſon's condemnation ſhall be ſo exactly proportioned to that of his guilt, that when the eyes of ſinners, which here they endeavour to ſhut, are opened, as they ſhall be hereafter, to ſee what their deeds have merited: *every mouth ſhall be ſtopped* §, and *all fleſh be ſilent before the Lord* ‖. For every circumſtance that can either aggravate or excuſe, will be impartially weighed; and *ſome be* accordingly *beaten with many ſtripes, and ſome with few* ¶. But what the loweſt degree of the Almighty's final vengeance may amount to, God forbid we ſhould any of us try: for whoever ſins, purpoſely or careleſsly, in hopes of a ſmall puniſhment, will for that very reaſon deſerve a heavy one.

Let us all therefore make the uſe that we ought, both of the terrors and the mercies of the Lord: awing ourſelves by the former from tranſgreſſing our duty, and encouraging ourſelves by the latter to the utmoſt diligence in performing it: that ſo we may paſs through life with comfort, meet death with cheerfulneſs; and having faithfully ſerved God in this world, be eternally and abundantly rewarded by him in the next.

* Rev. xiv. 10, 11. † Iſa. lxvi. 24. Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.
‡ Eccluſ. xv. 17. § Rom. iii. 19. ‖ Zech. ii. 15. ¶ Luke xii. 47, 48.

LECTURE XVIII.

First Commandment.

THE whole duty of man conſiſts in three points: Renouncing what God hath forbidden us, believing what he hath taught us, and doing what he hath required of us: which accordingly are the things promiſed in our name at our baptiſm. The two former I have already explained to you. And therefore I proceed at preſent to the third.

Now the things which God requires to be done are of two ſorts: either ſuch as have been always the duty of all men; or ſuch as are peculiarly the duty of Chriſtians. And our catechiſm very properly treats of the former ſort firſt, comprehending them under thoſe Ten Commandments, which were delivered by the Creator of the world, on Mount Sinai, in a moſt awful manner, as you may read in the 19th and 20th chapters of Exodus. For though indeed they were then given to the Jews particularly, yet the things contained in them are ſuch, as all mankind from the beginning were bound to obſerve *. And therefore, even under the Moſaic diſpenſation, they, and the tables on which they were engraven, and the ark in which they were put, were diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of God's ordinances by a peculiar regard, as containing the Covenant of the Lord †. And though the Moſaic diſpenſation be now at an end, yet concerning theſe moral precepts of it our Saviour declares, that *one jot or one title ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the law, till all be fulfilled* ‡. Accordingly, we find both him and his apoſtles, quoting theſe ten commandments, as matter of perpetual obligation to Chriſtians: who are now, as the Jews were formerly, *the Iſrael of God* §.

Indeed the whole New Teſtament, and eſpecially the ſermon of our bleſſed Lord on the mount, inſtructs us to carry their

* Decem ſermones illi in tabulis nihil novum docent, ſed quod obliteratum fuerat admonent. Novatian. de lib. Judaicis, c. 3.

† Exod. xxxiv. 28. Deut. iv. 13. ix. 9. 11, 15. Joſh. iii. 11. 1 Kin. viii. 9, 21. 2 Chron. v. 10. vi. 11. ‡ Mat. v. 18. § Gal. vi. 16.

their obligation farther, that is, to more points, than either the Jews, a people of groſs underſtanding and carnal diſpoſitions, commonly took into conſideration; or their prophets were commiſſioned diſtinctly to repreſent to them; the wiſdom of God foreſeeing, that it would only increaſe their guilt: and farther indeed, than the words of the commandments, if taken ſtrictly, expreſs. But the reaſon is, that being viſibly intended for a ſummary of human duty, they both may, and muſt be underſtood, by thoſe who are capable of penetrating into the depth of their meaning, to imply more than they expreſs. And therefore, to comprehend their full extent, it will be requiſite to obſerve the following rules. Where any ſin is forbidden in them, the oppoſite duty is implicitely enjoined: and where any duty is enjoined, the oppoſite ſin is implicitely forbidden. Where the higheſt degree of any thing evil is prohibited; whatever is faulty in the ſame kind, tho' in a lower degree, is by conſequence ſo prohibited. And where one inſtance of virtuous behaviour is commanded, every other, that hath the ſame nature, and ſame reaſon for it, is underſtood to be commanded too. What we are expected to abſtain from, we are expected to avoid, as far as we can, all temptations to it, and occaſions of it: and what we are expected to practiſe, we are expected to uſe all fit means, that may better enable us to practiſe it. All that we are bound to do ourſelves, we are bound, on fitting occaſions, to exhort and aſſiſt others to do, when it belongs to them: and all that we are bound not to do, we are to tempt nobody elſe to do, but keep them back from it, as much as we have opportunity. The ten commandments, excepting two that required enlargement, are delivered in few words: which brief manner of ſpeaking hath great Majeſty in it. But explaining them according to theſe rules; which are natural and rational in themſelves, favoured by ancient Jewiſh writers *, authorized by our bleſſed Saviour, and certainly deſigned by the makers of the catechiſm to be uſed in expounding it: we ſhall find, that there is no part of the moral law, but may be fitly ranked under them: as will appear by what ſhall be ſaid, in ſpeaking ſeparately on each commandment.

Before

* Χρη δε μηδ' εκεινο αγνοειν, ὁτι οἱ ι λογοι κεφαλαια νομισεισι, των εν αὐτοις παρ' ὁλην την νομοθεσιαν εν ταις ἱεραις βιβλοις ανεγεγραφιντων. Philo de Decal. The ten commandments are אמות התורה ושרשיה. Cozri, page 44. See alſo there, p. 107.

Before them all, is placed a general preface: expreſſing, firſt, the authority of him who gave them; "I am the Lord thy God:" Secondly, His goodneſs to thoſe whom he enjoined to obſerve them; "who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the houſe of bondage." Now the authority of God over us Chriſtians, is as great, as it could be over the Jews. And his goodneſs is much greater, in freeing us from the bondage of ſin, and opening to us the heavenly land of promiſe, than it was in leading them, from Egyptian ſlavery, to the earthly Canaan: though indeed this deliverance, having made ſo freſh and ſo ſtrong an impreſſion on them, was the fitteſt to be mentioned at that time.

The ten commandments being originally written by the finger of God himſelf, on two tables of ſtone; and conſiſting of two parts, our duty to our Maker, and to our fellow-creatures; which we can never perform as we ought, if we neglect that we owe to ourſelves; the four firſt are uſually called duties of the firſt table; the ſix laſt, of the ſecond. And our Saviour, in effect, divides them accordingly, when he reduces them to theſe: "Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; and thy neighbour, as thyſelf*."

The firſt Commandment is, "Thou ſhalt have none other gods, but me."

The ſame reaſons, which prove, that God is, prove that there is but one God. The imagination of two or more beings, each perfect and each infinite, is at firſt ſight groundleſs. For one ſuch Being is ſufficient to produce and govern every thing elſe: and therefore more than one can never be proved by reaſon: and yet, if there were more, all men would ſurely have had ſome way of knowing it: and till we have, we are not to believe it. Indeed we have ſtrong reaſons to believe the contrary. For if there is no difference between theſe ſeveral ſuppoſed Beings, they are but one and the ſame. And if there is any difference, one muſt be leſs perfect than the other, and therefore imperfect, and therefore not God. Beſides, as the whole courſe of nature appears to proceed uniformly under one direction; there is, without queſtion, only one director; not ſeveral, thwarting each other.

And what reaſon teaches in this matter, ſcripture every

* Matth. xxii. 37, 39.

where confirms; forbidding us to worſhip, or believe in any other deity, than the one Maker and Ruler of heaven and earth; who hath manifeſted himſelf to all men by the works of his hands; to the Patriarchs and Jews, by the revelations recorded in Moſes and the Prophets; and finally to Chriſtians, by his Son our Lord: who, in a way and manner to us inconceivable, is one with the Father; and the Holy Spirit with both: as I have already ſhown you, in diſcourſing on the Creed.

There being then this one only God; the commandment before us enjoins,

I. That we have him for our God:

II. That we have no other.

I. That we have him: that is, think ſo of him, and behave ſo to him, as his infinite perfection, and our abſolute dependance on him, require: which general duty towards God, our catechiſm very juſtly branches out into the following particulars:

Firſt, That *we believe in him. For he that cometh to God muſt believe that he is* *. The foundation on which this belief ſtands, I have ſhown in its proper place. And the great thing, in which it conſiſts, is, that we fix firmly in our minds, recall frequently to our memories, and imprint deeply upon our hearts, an awful perſuaſion of the being and preſence, the power and juſtice, the holineſs and truth, of this great Lord of all. The conſequence of this will be,

Secondly, That we *fear him.* For ſuch attributes as theſe, duly conſidered, muſt fill the moſt innocent creatures with reverence and ſelf-abaſement. But ſinful and guilty ones, as we know ourſelves to have been, have cauſe to feel yet ſtronger emotions in their ſouls from ſuch a meditation: Apprehenſions of his diſpleaſure, and ſollicitude for his pardon; leading us naturally to that penitent care of our hearts and lives, on which he hath graciouſly aſſured us, that thro' faith in Chriſt Jeſus, we ſhall be forgiven. And then, gratitude for his mercy will prompt us to the

Third duty towards him, which our catechiſm ſpecifies, that we *love him: the fear of the Lord* being, as the ſon of Sirach declares, *the beginning of his love* †. For whenever we come to re-

 flect

* Heb. xi. 6. † Eccluſ. xxv. 12.

flect ſeriouſly on that goodneſs, which hath given us all the comforts that we enjoy; that pity which offers pardon, on moſt equitable terms, for all the faults that we have committed; that grace, which enables us to perform every duty acceptably; and that infinite bounty, which rewards our imperfect performances with eternal happineſs: we cannot but feel ourſelves bound to love ſuch a Benefactor, *with all our heart, and with all our mind, with all our ſoul, and all our ſtrength*; to rejoice in being under his government; *make our boaſt of him all the day long* *; and chuſe him for *our portion for ever* †. A mind thus affected, would be uneaſy, without paying the regard ſet down in the

Fourth place, Which is, *to worſhip him*: to acknowledge our dependence, and pay our homage to him; both in private, to preſerve and improve a ſenſe of religion in ourſelves; and in public, to ſupport and ſpread it in the world. The firſt part of worſhip, mentioned in the catechiſm, and the firſt in a natural order of things, is *giving him thanks*. God originally made and fitted all his creatures for happineſs: if any of them have made themſelves miſerable, this doth not leſſen their obligation of thankfulneſs to him: but his continuing ſtill good, and abounding in forgiveneſs and liberality, increaſes that obligation unſpeakably. With a grateful ſenſe of his paſt favours is cloſely connected, *putting our truſt in him* for the time to come. And juſtly doth the catechiſm require it to be our *whole truſt*. For his power and goodneſs are infinite: thoſe of every creature may fail us; and all that they can poſſibly do for us, proceeds ultimately from him. Now, a principal expreſſion of reliance on God is, petitioning for his help. For if we *pray in faith* ‡, we ſhall live ſo too. And therefore truſting in him, which might have been made a ſeparate head, is included in this of worſhip; and put between the firſt part of it, *giving thanks to him* §, and the ſecond, *calling upon him*: according to that of the Pſalmiſt; "O Lord, in thee have I truſted: let me never be confounded §." To call upon God, is to place ourſelves in his preſence; and there to beg of him, for ourſelves, and each other, with unfeigned humility and ſubmiſſion, ſuch aſſiſtance in our duty, ſuch proviſion for our wants,

* Pſal. xliv. 8, 9. † Pſal. lxxiii. 25, 26. ‡ Jam. i. 6. v. 15.
§ Pſal. xxxi. 1.

wants, and ſuch defence againſt our enemies, of every kind, as infinite wiſdom ſees fit for us all. After this evident obligation, follows a

Fifth not leſs ſo: *to honour his holy name and word:* not preſuming even to ſpeak of the great God in a negligent way; but preſerving, in every expreſſion and action, that reverence to him, which is due: paying, not a ſuperſtitious, but a decent and reſpectful regard, to whatever bears any peculiar relation to him; his day, his church, his miniſters, but eſpecially honouring his holy word, the law of our lives and the foundation of our hopes, by a diligent ſtudy and firm belief of what it teaches; and that univerſal obedience to what it commands, which our catechiſm reſerves for the

Sixth and laſt, as it is undoubtedly the greateſt, thing: *to ſerve him truly all the days of our life.* Obedience is the end of faith and fear; the proof of love; the foundation of truſt; the neceſſary qualification, to make worſhip and honour of every kind acceptable. This therefore muſt complete the whole, that we "walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameleſs *," not thinking any one ſo difficult, as to deſpair of it: or ſo ſmall, as to deſpiſe it; and never be "weary in well-doing: for we ſhall reap in due ſeaſon, if we faint not †:" and he alone "ſhall be ſaved, that endureth to the end ‡." But we muſt now proceed to obſerve,

II. That, as this commandment requires us to acknowledge the one true God; ſo it forbids us to acknowledge any other.

Both before, and long after the law of Moſes was given, the generality of the world entertained a belief, that there were many gods; a great number of beings, ſuperior to men, that amongſt them governed the world, and were fit objects of devotion. To theſe, as their own fancy, or the folly or fraud of others led them, they aſcribed more or leſs both of power and goodneſs; attributed to ſeveral of them the vileſt actions, that could be; ſuppoſed them to preſide, ſome over one nation or city, ſome over another; worſhipped a few or a multitude of them, juſt as they pleaſed; and that with a ſtrange variety of ceremonies, abſurd and impious, immoral and barbarous. Amidſt this crowd of imaginary deities, the real one

* Luke i. 6. † Gal. vi. 9. ‡ Mat. xxiv. 13.

was almoſt entirely forgotten: falſe religion and irreligion divided the world between them; and wickedneſs of every kind was authorized by both. The cure for theſe dreadful evils muſt plainly be, reſtoring the old true notion of one only God, ruling the world himſelf: which therefore was the firſt great article of the Jewiſh faith, as it is of ours.

Chriſtians can hardly in words profeſs a plurality of gods: but in reality they do, if they ſuppoſe the divine nature common to more than one Being; or think our Saviour, or the Holy Spirit, mere creatures, and yet pay them divine honours. But beſides theſe, we apprehend the Church of Rome to ſin againſt the preſent commandment, when they pray to angels, to the holy virgin and the ſaints, as being able every where to hear them; and having not only temporal relief, but grace and ſalvation, in their power to beſtow. Nay, were the plea which they ſometimes make a true one; that they only pray to them to intercede with God; yet it would be an inſufficient one. For there is no reaſon to believe, that they have any knowledge of ſuch prayers: or if they had, as "there is one God," ſo there is "one Mediator between God and man *." And we have neither precept, nor allowance, nor example, in the whole Bible, of applying to any other, amongſt all the abſent inhabitants of the inviſible world.

But there are ſeveral ways more of tranſgreſſing this commandment. If we aſcribe things, which befal us, to fate, or to chance, or to nature; and mean any thing real by theſe words, different from that order, which our Maker's providence hath appointed; we ſet up in effect other gods beſides him. If we imagine the influence of ſtars, the power of ſpirits, in ſhort, any power whatever, to be independent on him, and capable of doing the leaſt matter, more than he judges proper to permit that it ſhould; this alſo is having more gods than one. If we ſet up ourſelves, or others above him; and obey, or expect any one elſe to obey, man rather than God; here again is in practice, though not in ſpeculation, the ſame crime. If we love or "truſt in uncertain riches," more than "the living God †;" this is that "covetouſneſs which is idolatry ‡." If we purſue unlawful ſenſual pleaſures, inſtead of delight-

* 1 Tim. ii. 5. † 1 Tim. vi. 17. ‡ Col. iii. 5.

delighting in his precepts; this is making a "god of our own belly *." In a word, if we allow ourselves to practise any wickedness whatever, we serve, by so doing, the false "god of this world †," instead of the true God of heaven, besides whom we ought not to have any other; and therefore to whom alone be, as is most due, all honour and obedience, now and for ever. Amen.

* Phil. iii. 19. † 2 Cor. iv. 4.

LECTURE XIX.

Second Commandment.

WE are now come to the Second Commandment: which the Church of Rome would persuade men is only part of the first. But they plainly relate to different things. The first appoints, that the object of our worship be only the true God: the next, that we worship him not under any visible resemblance or form. And besides, if we join these two into one, there will be no tenth left; though the scripture itself hath called them ten *: to avoid which absurdity, the Romanists have committed another, by dividing the tenth into two. And they might as well have divided it into six or seven; as I shall show you, in discoursing upon it. For these reasons, the oldest and most considerable, both of the Jewish and Christian writers, who distinguish the commandments by their number, distinguish them in the same manner that we do. Perhaps it may seem of small consequence, how that before us is counted, provided it be not omitted. And we must own, that some persons before the rise of popery, and some Protestants since the Reformation, have, without any ill design, reckoned it as the Papists do. But what both the former have done by mere

* Exod. xxxiv. 28. Deut. iv. 13. x. 4.

mere miſtake, theſe laſt endeavour to defend out of policy: well knowing, that when once they have got the ſecond to be conſidered as only a part of the firſt, they can much more eaſily paſs it over, as a part of no great ſeparate meaning or importance, than if it were thought a diſtinct precept. And accordingly, in ſome of their ſmall books of devotion, they paſs it over, and leave it out entirely*. But it deſerves, as I ſhall now ſhow you, another ſort of regard.

The Prophet Iſaiah very juſtly puts the queſtion: *To whom will ye liken God? Or what likeneſs will ye compare unto him*†? He is an inviſible Spirit: therefore repreſenting him in a viſible ſhape, is repreſenting him to be ſuch as he is not. He is every where preſent: therefore a figure, confined by its nature to a particular place, muſt incline perſons to a wrong conception of him. He is the living, wiſe, and powerful Governor of the world: therefore to expreſs him by a dead lump of matter muſt be doing him diſhonour. We are unable indeed, at beſt, to ſpeak or think worthily of him: and we cannot well avoid uſing ſome of the ſame phraſes, concerning him and his actions, which we do concerning the parts and motions of our own bodies. But we can very well avoid making viſible images of him: and the plaineſt reaſon teaches, that we ought to avoid it; becauſe they lower and debaſe mens notions of God: lead the weaker ſort into ſuperſtitious and fooliſh apprehenſions and practices: and provoke thoſe of better abilities, from a contempt of ſuch childiſh repreſentations, to diſregard and ridicule the religion into which they are adopted.

Therefore, in the early ages of the world, many of the heathens themſelves had no images of the deity. Particularly, the ancient Perſians had none‡. Nor had the firſt Romans; Numa, their ſecond king, having, as the philoſopher Plutarch, himſelf a Roman magiſtrate, though a Greek by birth, tells us, *forbidden them to repreſent God in the form, either of a man or any other animal.* "And accordingly, he ſaith, they had neither

* This they do in the Latin Office of the Virgin, and in ſome of their Engliſh devotional books. Indeed there they omit likewiſe all but the firſt ſentence of our fourth commandment, and the promiſe in our fifth: perhaps to palliate their preceding omiſſion.

† Iſa. xl. 18. ‡ Herodot. l. i. § 131.

ther any painted nor engraved figure of him for 170 years; but temples, void of any image of any ſhape; thinking it impious to liken a ſuperior nature to inferior ones; and impoſſible to attain the notion of God otherwiſe than by the underſtanding *." And *Varro*, one of the moſt learned of their own authors, after acknowledging, that "during more than 170 years they worſhipped the gods without any viſible repreſentation," added, that "had they never had any, their religion had been the purer: for which opinion, amongſt other evidences, he brought that of the Jewiſh people; and ſcrupled not to ſay in concluſion, that they who firſt ſet up images of the gods in the ſeveral nations, leſſened the reverence of their countrymen towards them, and introduced error concerning them †." So much wiſer were theſe heathen Romans in this point, than the Chriſtian Romans are now.

But when ſome of the eaſtern kingdoms had fallen into this corruption; particularly the Egyptians, who claimed the invention as an honour ‡, the great care of God was to preſerve or free his own people from it. The words of this commandment expreſs that purpoſe very ſtrongly: and very clearly forbid not only making and worſhipping repreſentations of falſe gods, but any repreſentation of God at all. And to ſhow yet more fully, that even thoſe of the true God are prohibited by it, Moſes, in Deuteronomy, immediately after mentioning the delivery of the ten commandments, adds with reſpect to the ſecond, "Take therefore good heed unto yourſelves; for ye ſaw no manner of ſimilitude, on the day that the Lord ſpake unto you in Horeb, out of the midſt of the fire: leſt ye corrupt yourſelves, and make you the ſimilitude of any figure §." And when the Iſraelites made a golden calf in the wilderneſs, though evidently their deſign was to repreſent by it not a falſe object of worſhip, but *the Lord* (in the original it is *Jehovah*) who brought them out of the land of Egypt; yet they were charged

* Plut. in Num. p. 65. Ed. Par. 1624.

† Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 4. c. 31. Dionyſius Halicarnaſſenſis indeed ſaith, l. 2. c. 15. p. 87. that Romulus erected images. But as he mentions them no otherwiſe than incidentally, amongſt the proviſions made by that prince for divine worſhip, his aſſertion is not ſo much to be regarded, as the two contrary more formal ones. Or we may ſuppoſe, that Numa took them down.

‡ Herodot. l. 2. § 4. § Deut. iv. 12,—15, 16.

charged with it, and punished for it, as a breach of their covenant with God: and Moſes accordingly broke, on that occaſion, the two tables of the commandments, which were, on their part, the conditions of that covenant *. Again, in after-times, when the kings of Iſrael ſet up the ſame repreſentation of the ſame true God at Dan and Bethel; the ſcripture conſtantly ſpeaks of it, as the leading ſin, from which all the reſt of their idolatries, and at laſt their utter deſtruction proceeded. For, from worſhipping the true God by an image, they ſoon came to worſhip the images of falſe gods too; and from thence fell into all ſorts of ſuperſtition, and all ſorts of wickedneſs.

Yet the church of Rome will have it, that we may now very lawfully and commendably practiſe what the Jews were forbidden. But obſerve: Not only the Jews, but the heathens alſo, who never were ſubject to the law of Moſes, are condemned in ſcripture for this mode of worſhip. For St Paul's accuſation againſt them is, that "when they knew God, they glorified him not as God; but became vain in their imaginations; and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image, made like to corruptible man †." And in another place he argues with the Athenians thus: "Foraſmuch as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or ſilver or ſtone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at: but now commandeth all men every where to repent ‡."

Where then is, or can be, the allowance of that image worſhip in the Bible, for which multitudes of the Romiſh communion are as earneſt as if it was commanded there? Nor is antiquity more favourable to it than ſcripture. For the primitive Chriſtians abhorred the very mention of images; holding even the trade of making them to be utterly unlawful. And indeed pretending to frame a likeneſs of God the Father Almighty, "whom no man ever hath ſeen, or can ſee §," as ſome of that church have done, without any cenſure from the rulers of it, liberal as they are of cenſures on other occaſions, is both a palpable and a heinous breach of this commandment. For, though we find in the Old Teſtament, that an angel hath ſometimes

* Exod. xxxii. † Rom. i. 21, 23. ‡ Acts xvii. 29, 30. § 1 Tim. vi. 16.

ſometimes appeared, repreſenting his perſon, as an Ambaſſador doth that of his prince; and though, in a viſion of *the Ancient of days, his garment was white as ſnow, and the hair of his head like pure wool**; yet theſe things gave the Jews no right then, and therefore can give us none now, to make other, or even the like repreſentations of him, contrary to his expreſs order.

Our bleſſed Saviour indeed exiſted in a human form. But we have not the leaſt knowledge of any one part or feature of his perſon. And therefore all attempts of exhibiting a likeneſs of him are utterly vain. Beſides, he hath appointed a very different memorial of himſelf, the ſacrament of his body and blood: and we ought to think that a ſufficient one. Theſe others can ſerve no good purpoſe, but what, by due meditation, may be attained as well without them. And there is great and evident danger of evil in them, from that unhappy proneneſs of mankind to fix their thoughts and affections on ſenſible objects, inſtead of raiſing them higher; which if any one doth not feel in himſelf, he muſt however ſee in others. But particularly in this caſe, long experience hath given ſad proof, that from ſetting up images of our gracious Redeemer, the holy virgin, and other ſaints, to remind perſons of them and their virtues, the world hath run on to pay ſuch imprudent and extravagant honours to the figures themſelves, as by degrees have ariſen to the groſſeſt idolatry.

Indeed ſome of the popiſh writers tell us, that they do not worſhip their images. Yet others of them, who have never been condemned for it, ſay quite the contrary, that they do worſhip them; and with the very ſame degree of worſhip, which they pay to the perſons repreſented by them. Nay, their public authoriſed books of prayers and ceremonies not only appoint the crucifix to be adored, but in form declare, that divine adoration is due to it. And accordingly they petition it, in ſo many words, expreſsly directed to the very *wood*, as *their only hope*, to *increaſe the joy and grace of the godly, and blot out the ſins of the wicked*†.

But let us ſuppoſe them to pay only an inferior honour to images, and to worſhip the Holy Trinity, and the ſaints by them.

* Daniel vii. 9.

† See Dr Hickes's collection of controverſial diſcourſes, vol. 1. p. 47.

them. Having no ground, or permiſſion to pray at all to ſaints departed, they certainly have none to uſe images for enlivening their prayers. If any words can forbid the worſhip of God, his Son and Spirit by images, this commandment forbids it. And if any excuſes or diſtinctions will acquit the papiſts of tranſgreſſing it, the ſame will acquit the ancient Jews and heathens alſo. For if many of the former mean only, that their adoration ſhould paſs through the image, as it were, to the perſon, for whom it was made; ſo did many of the Pagans plead, that their meaning was juſt the ſame*: yet the ſcripture accuſes them all of idolatry. And if great numbers of the Pagans did abſolutely pray to the image itſelf; ſo do great numbers of the Papiſts too: and ſome of their own writers honeſtly confeſs and lament it.

But further: Had they little or no regard, as they ſometimes pretend, to the image; but only to the perſon repreſented by it: why is an image, of the bleſſed virgin ſuppoſe, in one place, ſo much more frequented, than another in a different place, and the prayers made before it thought to have ſo much more efficacy?

Upon the whole, therefore, they plainly appear to be guilty of that image worſhip, which reaſon and ſcripture condemn. Nor do they ſo much as alledge either any command or expreſs allowance for it. And yet they have pronounced a curſe upon all who reject it.

But let us go on, from the prohibition, to the reaſons given for it in the commandment. The firſt is a very general, but very awful one. *For the Lord thy God is a jealous God:* not jealous for himſelf, leſt he ſhould ſuffer for the follies of his creatures: that cannot be: but jealous for us, for his Spouſe the church; leſt our notions of his nature and attributes, and conſequently of the duties which we owe to him, being depraved, and our minds darkened with ſuperſtitious perſuaſions, and fears, and hopes, we ſhould depart from the fidelity which we have vowed to him, and fall into thoſe grievous immoralities, which St Paul, in the beginning of his epiſtle to the Romans,

* See a remarkable proof of this produced in an epiſtle to Mr Warburton, concerning the conformity of Rome, Pagan and Papal: printed for Roberts, 1748, 8vo. p. 21.

mans, deſcribes as the conſequences of idolatry*, and which have been its conſequences in all times and places.

The ſecond reaſon for this prohibition is more particular: that God will *viſit the ſins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him.* For, obſerve, worſhipping him irrationally, or in a manner which he hath forbidden, he interprets to be hating him: as it muſt proceed, wholly or in part, from a diſhonourable opinion of him, and tend to ſpread the like opinion amongſt others. Now we are not to underſtand by this threatening, that God will ever, on account of the ſins of parents, puniſh children, in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word, *puniſh*, when they deſerve it not †. But in the courſe of things, eſtabliſhed by his providence, it comes to paſs, that the ſins of one perſon, or one generation, lead thoſe who come after, into the ſame, or other, perhaps greater ſins; and ſo bring upon them double ſufferings, partly the fruits of their predeceſſors faults, partly of their own. And when ſucceſſive ages follow one another in crimes, beſides the natural bad effects of them, which puniſh them in ſome meaſure, God may juſtly threaten ſeverer additional corrections, than he would elſe inflict for their perſonal tranſgreſſions ‡: both becauſe it may deter men from propagating wickedneſs down to their poſterity; and becauſe if it doth not, inveterate evils demand a rougher cure. Accordingly here the Iſraelites are forewarned, that if they fell into idolatry, they and their children would fall, by means of it, into all ſorts of abominations: and not only, theſe would of courſe produce many miſchiefs to both, but God would chaſtiſe the following generations with heavier ſtrokes, for not taking warning, as they ought to have done, by the miſbehaviour and ſufferings of the former. Denouncing this intention beforehand muſt influence them, if any thing could: becauſe it muſt give them a concern, both for themſelves, and their deſcendants too; for whom, next to themſelves, if not equally, men are always intereſted. And therefore viſiting ſins upon them to the third and fourth generation ſeems to be mentioned; becauſe either the life, or however

* Rom. i. 21,—32. † Againſt this wrong imagination, Cotta in Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 3. § 38. inveighs vehemently.

‡ See Sherlock on providence, p. 382,—390.

the ſollicitude, of a perſon may be ſuppoſed to extend thus far, and ſeldom further.

This threatening therefore was not only juſt, but wiſe and kind, on the ſuppoſition, which in general it was reaſonable to make, that in ſuch matters children would imitate their wicked progenitors. And whenever any did not; either their innocence would avert the impending evils; or they would be abundantly rewarded in a future life for what the ſins of others had brought upon them in the preſent.

But if God hath threatened to puniſh the breach of this precept *to the third and fourth generation*, he hath promiſed to *ſhow mercy unto thouſands*, that is, ſo long as the world ſhall endure, to *them that love him and keep his commandments*. To the Jews he fulfilled this engagement, as far as they gave him opportunity, by temporal bleſſings. And amongſt Chriſtians there is ordinarily a fair proſpect, that a nation, or a family, pious and virtuous through ſucceſſive ages, will be recompenſed with increaſing happineſs in every age: which is a powerful motive, both for worſhipping God in purity ourſelves, and educating thoſe, who are placed under our care, to do ſo too. Yet it muſt be acknowledged, that neither the rewards foretold, nor the puniſhments denounced, in this commandment, are ſo conſtantly diſtributed on earth under the goſpel diſpenſation, as they were under that of the law. But ſtill our Maker as certainly requires, as ever he did, ſince he *is a Spirit, to be worſhipped in ſpirit and in truth**: and the inducement to it is abundantly ſufficient, that the *idolaters*, amongſt other ſinners, *ſhall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimſtone* †. Not that we are to be forward in applying ſo dreadful a ſentence to the caſe of thoſe, whether Chriſtians or others, who, in this or any reſpect, offend through ſuch ignorance or miſtake, as, for aught we can tell, is excuſable. May our heavenly *Father forgive them: for they know not what they do* ‡. But we ſhould be very thankful to him for the light, which he hath cauſed to ſhine upon us; and very careful to *walk* in it *as* becomes the *children of light, having no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs* §.

* John iv. 24. † Rev. xxi. 8. ‡ Luke xxiii. 34. § Eph. v. 8, 11.

LEC-

LECTURE XX.

THIRD COMMANDMENT.

THE firſt commandment having provided that we ſhould worſhip only the one true God; and the ſecond prohibited worſhipping him in a manner ſo unworthy and dangerous, as by images; the third proceeds to direct, that we preſerve a due reverence to him in our whole converſation and behaviour. *Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.* Under theſe words are forbidden ſeveral things which differ in their degrees of guilt.

1. The firſt, and higheſt offence is, when we ſwear by the name of God falſely. For vanity in ſcripture frequently means ſomething which is not what it would appear. And hence uſing God's name *in vain*, or to vanity, principally ſignifies, applying it to confirm a falſehood. Doing this deliberately, is one of the moſt ſhocking crimes of which we can be guilty. For taking an oath is declaring ſolemnly, that we know ourſelves to be in the preſence of God, and him to be witneſs of what we ſpeak: it is appealing to him, that our words expreſs the very truth of our hearts; and renouncing all title to his mercy, if they do not. This it is to ſwear: and think then what it muſt be, to ſwear falſely. In other ſins men endeavour to forget God: but perjury is daring and braving the Almighty to his very face; bidding him take notice of the falſehood that we utter, and do his worſt.

Now of this dreadful crime we are guilty, if ever we ſwear, that we do not know or believe, what indeed we do; or that we do know or believe, what indeed we do not: if ever, being upon our oaths, we miſlead thoſe, whom we ought to inform; and give any other than the exacteſt and faireſt account that we can, of any matter concerning which we are examined. Again, if we promiſe upon oath to do a thing, without firmly deſigning to do it; or if we promiſe not to do a thing, without firmly deſigning to abſtain from it: this alſo is forſwearing ourſelves. Nay further; provided the thing, which

which we promiſe be lawful, if we do not ever after take all the care, that can be reaſonably expected, to make our promiſe good, we are guilty of perjury; and of living in it, ſo long as we live in that neglect. If indeed a perſon hath ſworn to do, what he thought he could have done; and it proves afterwards, unexpectedly, that he cannot; ſuch a one is chargeable only with miſtake, or inconſiderateneſs at moſt. And if we either promiſe, or threaten any thing, which we cannot lawfully do: making ſuch a promiſe is a ſin; but keeping it would be another, perhaps a greater ſin; and therefore it innocently may, and in conſcience ought to be broken. But if we have promiſed what we may lawfully, but only cannot conveniently, perform; we are by no means on that account releaſed from our engagement: unleſs either we were unqualified to promiſe, or were deceived into promiſing: or the perſon to whom we have engaged, voluntarily ſets us at liberty; or the circumſtances of the caſe be plainly and confeſſedly ſuch, that our promiſe was not originally deſigned to bind us in them.

You ſee then what is perjury. And you muſt ſee, it is not only the directeſt and groſſeſt affront to God; for which reaſon it is forbidden in the firſt table of the ten commandments; but the moſt pernicious injury to our fellow-creatures; on which account you will find it again forbidden in the ſecond table. If perſons will aſſert falſely upon oath; no one knows what to believe; no one's property or life is ſafe. And if perſons will promiſe falſely upon oath: no one can know whom to truſt; all ſecurity of government and human ſociety, all mutual confidence in trade and commerce, in every relation and condition, is utterly at an end. With the greateſt reaſon therefore are perjured wretches abhorred of all the world. And no intereſt of our own, no kindneſs or compaſſion for other perſons, no turn or purpoſe of whatſoever ſort to be ſerved by it, can ever juſtify our ſwerving at all from truth, either in giving evidence, or entering into engagements. Nor muſt we think in ſuch caſes to come off with equivocations, evaſions, and quibbles; and imagine it innocent to deceive this way. On the contrary, the more artful and cunning our falſehoods are, the more deliberate and miſchievous, and therefore the wickeder they are. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked:*

ed *: and the following are the declarations of his ſacred word to the upright man: *Lord, who ſhall dwell in thy tabernacle, and reſt upon thy holy hill? He that ſpeaketh the truth from his heart, and hath uſed no deceit with his tongue: he that ſweareth unto his neighbour and diſappointeth him not, though it were to his own hindrance*†. But to the perjured: *Seeing he deſpiſed the oath, by breaking the covenant; thus ſaith the Lord God: As I live, ſurely mine Oath that he hath deſpiſed, and my Covenant that he hath broken, I will recompenſe it upon his head*‡.

[Let us all ſtand in awe of ſo dreadful a threatening, and avoid ſo horrible a guilt. Particularly at preſent, let all who have ſworn allegiance to the King, faithfully *keep it, and that in regard to the oath of God*§. And let thoſe who have not ſworn, remember however, that merely claiming the protection of a government, implies ſome promiſe of being dutiful to it in return; and that a ſucceſsful rebellion would not only tempt multitudes of our fellow-ſubjects to perjury, but lay our country, its laws and religion, at the abſolute mercy of a faith-breaking church‖.]

One thing more ſhould be added here; for it cannot well be mentioned too often, that next to falſe ſwearing, falſe ſpeaking and lying, whether in what we aſſert or what we promiſe, is a grievous ſin, and hateful to God and man. Though we do not call on our Maker to witneſs, yet he is a witneſs of whatever we ſay. And it is preſumptuous wickedneſs to utter an untruth in the preſence of *the God of truth*¶. It is alſo at the ſame time very hurtful to other perſons: and very fooliſh with reſpect to ourſelves. For they who will lie, to conceal their faults, or to carry their ends, are perpetually found out, diſappointed and ſhamed, for the moſt part, in a very little while: and then, for ever after, they are diſtruſted and diſbelieved, even when they ſpeak truth: as indeed who can depend upon ſuch, or who would venture to employ them? Many other faults may be borne, ſo long as honeſty and ſincerity laſt: but a failure in theſe cannot be paſſed over: ſo juſt is Solomon's obſervation: *The lip of truth ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment*⁂.

2. Another

* Gal. vi. 7. † Pſal. xv. 1, 2, 3, 5. ‡ Ezek. xvii. 18, 19.
§ Eccl. viii. 2. ‖ This paragraph was added in the time of the Rebellion, 1745. ¶ Pſal. xxxi. 5. ⁂ Prov. xii. 19.

2. Another way of *taking God's name in vain* is, when we ſwear by it needleſsly, though it be not falſely. For this alſo the word *in vain* ſignifies.

One way of doing ſo, is by raſh and inconſiderate vows: for a vow, being a promiſe made ſolemnly to God, partakes of the nature of an oath. And there may poſſibly be ſometimes good reaſons for entering into this kind of engagement. But, vowing to do what there is no uſe in doing, is trifling with our Creator: making unlawful vows, is directly telling him, we will diſobey him: making ſuch without neceſſity, as are difficult to keep, is leading ourſelves into temptation: and indeed making any, without much thought and prudent advice firſt, uſually proves an unhappy ſnare. One vow we have all made, and were bound to make, that of our baptiſm, which includes every real good reſolution. That therefore let us carefully keep, and frequently ratify; and we ſhall ſcarce have occaſion to make any more.

Another very needleſs, and always ſinful, uſe of God's name is, by oaths in common diſcourſe. Too many there are, who fill up with them a great part of their moſt trifling converſation: eſpecially, if ever ſo little warmth riſes in talk, then they abound in them. Now it is unavoidable, but perſons, who are perpetually ſwearing, muſt frequently perjure themſelves. But were that otherwiſe; it is great irreverence, upon every ſlight thing we ſay, to invoke God for a witneſs; and mix *his holy and reverend name* * with the idleſt things that come out of our mouths. And what makes this practice the more inexcuſable is, that we cannot have either any advantage from it, or any natural pleaſure in it. Sometimes it ariſes from a haſtineſs and impatience of temper; which is but increaſed by giving this vent to it: whereas it is every one's wiſdom, not to let it break out in any way, much leſs in ſuch a way. But generally it is nothing more than a ſilly and profane cuſtom, inconſiderately taken up: and there are the ſtrongeſt reaſons for laying it down immediately. It will make us diſliked and abhorred by good perſons, and ſcarce recommend us to the very worſt. No perſon is the ſooner believed for his frequent ſwearing: on the contrary, a modeſt ſerious affirmation is always much more regarded. And if any one's character

* Pſalm cxi. 9.

matters is so low, that his word cannot be taken; he must think of other methods to retrieve it. For he will not at all mend matters, by adding his oath ever so often over. Then if swearing be affected, as becoming; it is certainly quite otherwise, in the highest degree. The very phrases used in it, as well as the occasions, on which they are used, are almost constantly absurd and foolish: and surely profaneness can never lessen the folly. Besides, they make the conversation of men shocking and hellish. They are acknowledged to be disrespectful to the company, in which they are used: and if regard to their earthly superiors can restrain persons from swearing; why should not the reverence, owing to our heavenly Father, do it much more effectually? But indeed the indulgence of this sin wears off by degrees all sense of religion, and of every thing that is good.

Justly therefore doth our Saviour direct; *But I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil* *. That is: avoid, not only the grosser oaths, but all the silly refinements and softenings of them, which men have contrived, in hope to make them seem innocent: for, though the name of God be not expressed, yet if it be implied, by mentioning something related to God, instead of himself; indeed whatever form is used to disguise it, the intent is the same; and the effect will be, bringing a sacred obligation into familiarity and contempt. Keep yourselves therefore, throughout the whole of your common conversation, within the bounds of a plain affirmation or denial: for whatever goes beyond these, proceeds from a bad turn of mind, and will produce bad consequences.

If indeed we be required to swear before a magistrate, or public officer, for the discovery of truth, and the doing of justice, this is notwithstanding lawful. For our Saviour forbids it only in *our communication*, our ordinary discourse: and he himself, our great pattern, answered upon oath to *the High Priest*, who *adjured him by the living God* †. Or though we be

* Mat. v. 34,—36. † Mat. xxvi. 46.

not called up by law, yet if ſome other weighty and extraordinary occaſion ſhould oblige us to call our Maker to witneſs; as St Paul hath done, in more places than one of his epiſtles; then alſo we may allowably do it, provided it be always with ſincerity and reverence. For by oaths, thus taken, men are benefited; and the name of God not profaned, but honoured. But in our daily talk, and communication with each other, it is our Saviour's peremptory precept, *Swear not at all:* a rule ſo evidently right and important, that even heathens have ſtrictly enjoined and followed it, to the ſhame of too many, who call themſelves Chriſtians.

Together with common ſwearing ſhould be mentioned another ſin, very near akin to it, and almoſt always joined with it, that monſtrous cuſtom of curſing; in direct contradiction to all humanity, and to the expreſs words of ſcripture, *Bleſs, and curſe not**. To wiſh the heavieſt judgments of God, and even eternal damnation, to a perſon, for the ſlighteſt cauſe, or none at all; to wiſh the ſame to ourſelves, if ſome trifling thing, that we are ſaying, be not true, which frequently after all is not true; amounts to the moſt deſperate impiety, if people at all conſider what they ſay. And though they do not, it is even then thoughtleſsly treating God, and his laws, and the awful ſanction of them, with contempt: and blotting out of their minds all ſerious regard to ſubjects, that will one day be found moſt ſerious things. *His delight was in curſing*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *and it ſhall happen unto him: he loved not bleſſing, therefore ſhall it be far from him* †.

3. Beſides the offences already mentioned, all indecent and unfit uſe of God's name in our diſcourſe, though it be not in ſwearing or curſing, comes within the prohibition of this commandment. All irreverent ſayings, and even thoughts, concerning his nature and attributes, his actions and his commands, fall under the ſame guilt; unleſs we are tormented with ſuch thoughts, whether we will or not: for then they are only an affliction, not a ſin. All ſorts of talk, ridiculing, miſrepreſenting, or inveighing againſt religion, or whatever is connected with it, incur the like condemnation. Nay, even want of attention in God's worſhip, *drawing near unto him with*

* om. xii. 14. † Pſal. cix. 16.

with our mouths, whilſt *we remove our hearts far from him* *, if it be wilfully or careleſsly indulged, makes us chargeable, in its degree, with the ſin of *taking his name in vain*.

4. Though we no way profane his name ourſelves; yet if we intice others to perjury and falſehood; or provoke them to raſh oaths and curſes; or give them any needleſs temptation to blaſpheme God; to ſpeak diſreſpectfully, or think ſlightly, of their Maker, or his laws, natural or revealed: by ſuch behaviour alſo we become acceſſary to the breach of this commandment; and rank ourſelves with thoſe, whom it expreſsly declares *God will not hold guiltleſs*: that is, will not acquit, but ſeverely puniſh.

Let us therefore be watchful to preſerve continually ſuch an awe of the Supreme Being upon our own minds, and thoſe of all who belong to us, as may on every occaſion effectually influence us to give him the glory due unto his name, both in our more ſolemn addreſſes to him, and in our daily words and actions. For *God is greatly to be feared in the aſſembly of the ſaints: and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him* †.

* Iſa. xxix. 13. † Pſal. lxxxi

LECTURE XXI.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

IF the worſhip of God were left at large to be performed at any time, too many would be tempted to defer and poſtpone it, on one pretence or another, till at length it would be performed at no time. And therefore, though he were to be adored only by each perſon ſeparately, and in private, it would be very expedient to fix on ſome ſtated returning ſeaſons, for that purpoſe. But reaſon ſhows it to be requiſite, and the experience of all ages proves it to be natural, that as we are ſo-

cial creatures, we ſhould be ſocial in religion, as well as other things, and honour in common our common Maker: that we ſhould unite in giving thanks to him for the bleſſings of life; a very great part of which we ſhould be incapable of, without uniting: that we ſhould join in praying forgiveneſs of the ſins, which we too often join in committing: petition him together for the mercies, which we have need of receiving together; and, by aſſembling to learn and acknowledge our ſeveral duties, keep alive in one another, as well as ourſelves, that conſtant regard to piety and virtue, on which our happineſs depends, here and hereafter.

Since therefore, on theſe accounts, there muſt be public worſhip and inſtruction: it is not only expedient, but neceſſary, that there ſhould be alſo fixed times appointed for it by ſufficient authority. And how much and what time ſhould be devoted to this purpoſe, every ſociety muſt have determined for themſelves, and would have found it hard enough to agree in determining, if God had given no intimation of his will in the caſe. But happily we are informed, in the hiſtory of the creation, that the Maker of the world, having finiſhed his work in ſix days, (which he could as eaſily have finiſhed in one moment, had it not been for ſome valuable reaſon, probably of inſtruction to us, *bleſſed the ſeventh day and ſanctified it**: that is, appointed every return of it to be religiouſly kept, as a ſolemn memorial, that *of him, and* therefore *to him, are all things* †. It is much the moſt natural to apprehend, that this appointment took place from the time when it is mentioned; from the time, when the reaſon of it took place. And it is no wonder at all, that, in ſo ſhort a hiſtory, notice ſhould not be taken of the actual obſervation of it before Moſes: for notice is not taken of it in 500 years after Moſes. Yet we know o a certainty, that in his time, at leaſt, it was ordered to be obſerved, both in this fourth commandment, and in other parts of the law, which direct more particularly the manner of keeping it.

The thing, moſt expreſsly enjoined the Jews, in each of theſe paſſages, is, reſting from all manner of work; and not ſuffering their families, their cattle, nor even the ſtrangers that lived amongſt them, to labour on that day. And the reaſon of this

* Gen. ii. 3. † om. xi. 36.

this reſt, given in the commandment, as you have it in the book of Exodus, is, that *the Lord reſted on the ſeventh day* from his work of creation. Not that this, or any thing, could be a fatigue to him. For *the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary* *. But the expreſſion means, that having then finiſhed the formation of the world, he ceaſed from it; and required men alſo to ceaſe from their labours every ſeventh day; in memory of that fundamental article of all religion, that the heavens and earth were made, and therefore are governed, by one infinitely wiſe, powerful, and good Being. And thus was the *Sabbath*, which word means the day of reſt, *a ſign*, as the ſcripture calls it, *betwéen God and the children of Iſrael* †; a mark, to diſtinguiſh them from all worſhippers of falſe deities.

But beſides this principal reaſon for the repoſe of every ſeventh day, two others are mentioned in the law: that it might remind them of that deliverance from heavy bondage, which God had granted them; *Remember, that thou waſt a ſervant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord brought thee out thence; therefore he commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day* ‡: and likewiſe that their ſervants and cattle might not be worn out with inceſſant toil; *that thine ox and thine aſs may reſt; and the ſon of thy handmaid, and the ſtranger, may be refreſhed* §. Such mercy indeed is little more than common prudence: but there are in the world multitudes of hard-hearted wretches, who would pay ſmall regard to that conſideration, were they left to their own liberty.

Now, merely abſtaining from common work on this day, in obedience to God's command, for ſuch religious and moral ends as theſe, was undoubtedly ſanctifying, or keeping it holy. But then we are not to ſuppoſe, that the leiſure, thus provided for men, was to be thrown away juſt as they pleaſed, inſtead of being uſefully employed. God directed the Jews: *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy ſoul, and with all thy might; and the words which I command thee this day, ſhall be in thy heart; and thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy children; and ſhalt talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thine houſe, and when thou*

* Iſa. xl. 28. † Exod. xxxi. 13, 17. Ezek. xx. 12, 20.
‡ Deut. v. 15. § Exod. xxiii. 12.

thou walkeſt by the way, and when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up *. Now, as he required them to attend ſo conſtantly to theſe duties; he could not but expect, they ſhould attend more eſpecially to them on that day, when the great foundation of all duty, his creating the world, was appointed to be commemorated; and when they had nothing to take off their thoughts from what they owed to God their Maker. There was a peculiar ſacrifice appointed for that day: there is a peculiar Pſalm compoſed for it, the ninety-ſecond: and theſe things are ſurely further intimations to us, that it muſt have been a time, peculiarly intended for the offering up of prayers and thankſgivings to Heaven.

Few indeed, or none, of God's laws were well obſerved in the days of the Old Teſtament. But ſtill as the Prieſts and Levites were diſperſed through the Jewiſh nation, that they might teach the people religion; ſo we read, that in good times they did teach it accordingly: and when could this be, but on the Sabbath day? We ſee it was the cuſtom of religious perſons, on that day, to reſort to the Prophets that were in Iſrael; doubtleſs to hear the word of God from their mouths †. We ſee public happineſs promiſed on this condition, that men ſhould "honour the Sabbath of the Lord, not doing their own ways, nor finding their own pleaſure, nor ſpeaking their own words ‡." We ſee abſolute ruin threatened for the profanation of it §. We ſee a time foretold, when "from one Sabbath to another all fleſh ſhould come to worſhip before the Lord ‖." And in conſequence of this when their captivity had taught the Jews a ſtricter regard to their duty, ſynagogues, and houſes of prayer, were erected *in every city*: where the Maker of all things was publicly adored, and his law *read and preached, every Sabbath day* ¶.

Such was the ſtate of things, when our Saviour came into the world: whoſe religion being intended for all mankind equally, the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, in which the Jews alone were concerned, was mentioned no longer in the divine laws: but inſtead of the commemoration of this, was ſubſtituted that of the Redemption of the world, from the dominion

* Deut. vi. 5,—7. † 2 Kings iv. 23. ‡ Iſa. lviii. 13, 14.
§ Jer. xvii. 27. ‖ Iſa. lxvi. 23. ¶ Acts xv. 21.

minion and puniſhment of ſin: which our bleſſed Redeemer accompliſhed by his death, and proved himſelf to have accompliſhed by his reſurrection. Accordingly, the firſt day of the week, being the day of his reſurrection, was appointed, in thankful remembrance of it, for the time of public worſhip amongſt Chriſtians, and therefore is called by St John, *the Lord's day**; though in common language it be more uſually called Sunday: as it was even before our Saviour's time, and may be for a better reaſon ſince, becauſe on it Chriſt, the Sun of Righteouſneſs aroſe. Accordingly ſome of the earlieſt fathers give it that name.

And that no one may doubt the lawfulneſs of this change of the day; it plainly appears, from ſeveral paſſages of St Paul, that we are not bound to obſerve the day of the Jewiſh Sabbath: and it ſtill more plainly appears, in the ſcripture hiſtory of the apoſtles, that they did obſerve, and direct the obſervation of our preſent Chriſtian Sabbath; as the whole church hath conſtantly done ſince, from their times to this, though it doth not appear, that they called it the Sabbath day for many hundreds of years. One day in ſeven being ſtill kept, the memory of the creation is as well preſerved, and the intent of this commandment as fully anſwered as before: and that one day in ſeven being choſen, on which our Saviour roſe again, the memory of the redemption wrought by him, and called in ſcripture, *a new creation*†, is, in the propereſt manner, as well as with the greateſt reaſon, perpetuated, along with the former.

The day then being thus fixed, which we ought to keep holy; it remains to conſider, how it ought to be kept. And,

1. It muſt be a day of reſt, in order to commemorate God's *reſting*, as the ſcripture expreſſes it, *from all his work, which he created and made*‡; and to allow that eaſe and refreſhment, which, with ſo great humanity, the commandment requires ſhould be given, not only to ſervants, but to the very cattle. Beſides, it cannot be a day of religion to mankind, without ſuch vacation from the ordinary labours of life, as may give ſufficient leiſure to diſtinguiſh it by exerciſes of piety. But then, as Chriſtians are not under a diſpenſation ſo rigorous in outward obſervances, as that of Moſes; they are not bound to

* Rev. i. 10. † 2 Cor. v. 17. Gal. vi. 15. ‡ Gen. ii. 3.

to ſo ſtrict and ſcrupulous a reſt, as the Jews were. Though indeed the Jews themſelves became, at laſt, much more ſcrupulous in this matter than they needed; and are accordingly reproved by our bleſſed Saviour: from whom we learn this general rule, that *the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath* *: and therefore all works of great neceſſity, or great goodneſs and mercy, if they cannot be deferred to another time, be they ever ſo laborious, may very allowably be done then. Only ſo far as the public wiſdom of the laws of the land hath reſtrained us, we ought certainly to reſtrain ourſelves, even from ſuch things, as, in our private opinion, we might otherwiſe think innocent. As to matters of leſs labour; what propriety, and decency, and reaſonable convenience require, we ſurely need not omit. And what practice of the more religious and conſiderate part of thoſe, amongſt whom we live, allows, hath without queſtion no ſmall title to our favourable opinion. But the liberties, taken by thoughtleſs or profane perſons, are not of any authority in the leaſt. And the ſafeſt general rule to go by, is to omit whatever may be ſinful, and is needleſs; and neither to require, nor ſuffer, thoſe who belong to us, to do, on this day, what we apprehend it unlawful to do ourſelves.

2. A reaſonable part of our day of holy reſt, muſt be employed in the public worſhip of God. This, you have ſeen, the Jews underſtood to be requiſite on their Sabbath: and the earlieſt account, which we have of ours, informs us, that *on the firſt day of the week, the diſciples came together to break bread*†: which means to celebrate the Lord's Supper. That with this was joined *the apoſtles doctrine and prayer*, we learn from another place of the ſame book of ſcripture ‡. And that every Lord's day was dedicated to the public offices of piety, the hiſtory of the church fully ſhows from the beginning. To ſtrengthen the obligation of attending on theſe offices, the laws of the land alſo enjoin it. And as all perſons need inſtruction in their duty both to God and man, and the generality have ſcarce any other ſeaſon for it, than the leiſure of the Sunday: if this moſt valuable time be either taken from them, or thrown away by them; they muſt become ignorant and vicious; and of conſequence miſerable in this world and the next. How wicked

* Mark ii. 27. † Acts xx. 7. ‡ Acts ii. 42.

wicked then, and how unwiſe, is it, either to throw contempt on ſuch an inſtitution, or on friyolous pretences to neglect improving by it!

3. Beſides aſſembling in the church on the Lord's day, every one ſhould employ ſome reaſonable part of it in the private exerciſes of piety: in thinking over their paſt behaviour, confeſſing their faults to God, and making prudent reſolutions againſt them for the future; in praying for themercies, which they more eſpecially want, and returning thanks for the bleſſings, with which Providence hath favoured them; in cultivating a temper of humanity; in doing acts of forgiveneſs, and ſetting apart ſomething according to their ability, for acts of charity; (for which laſt St Paul hath particularly recommended this time*:) and in ſeriouſly conſidering at home, whatever they have heard in God's houſe. For our public religion will ſoon degenerate into an uſeleſs form, unleſs we preſerve and enliven the Spirit of it, by ſuch means as theſe in private: to which they, above all perſons, are bound on the Lord's day, who either have little leiſure for them on others, or make little uſe of it.

When once perſons have brought themſelves to ſpend ſo much of the Sunday as is fitting in this manner; it will then, and not before, be time for them to aſk, how the remainder of it may be ſpent. For it is a very bad ſign, to be careleſs of obſerving what is commanded; and zealous for extending to the utmoſt, what at beſt is only permitted. Over great ſtrictneſs however muſt be avoided. And therefore decent civility and friendly converſation may both innocently and uſefully have a place in the vacant part of our Lord's day: of which it is really one valuable benefit, that it gives even the loweſt perſons an opportunity of appearing to each other in the moſt agreeable light they can, and thus promotes mutual good will. Nor is it neceſſary at all to baniſh cheerfulneſs from our converſation on this day; which being a feſtival, though a religious one, we ſhould partake of all God's bleſſings upon it with joyful hearts. But then ſuch inſtances of freedom and levity, in talk and behaviour, as would ſcarce be proper at any time, are doubly improper at this; and tend very fatally to undo

* 1 Cor xvi. 2.

whatever good the preceding part of the day may have done.

And as to the taking further liberties of diverſions and amuſements, though they are not in expreſs words forbidden, for the deſire of them is not ſuppoſed in the word of God; yet by the laws both of Church and State they are. And what need is there for them, or what good uſe of them? If perſons are ſo vehemently ſet upon theſe things, that they are uneaſy to be ſo much as one day in ſeven without them; it is high time, that they ſhould bring themſelves to more moderation, by exerciſing ſome abſtinence from them. And if they are at all indifferent about them, ſurely they ſhould conſider, what muſt be the effect of introducing and indulging them: what offence and uneaſineſs theſe things give the more ſerious and valuable part of the world; what comfort and countenance to the unthinking and irreligious part; what a dangerous example to the lower part: what encouragement they afford to extravagance, and the mad love of pleaſure: what a ſnare they place in the way of all that think them unlawful; and yet will thus be tempted, to theſe liberties firſt, and then to others, againſt their conſciences: and, to add no more, how unhappy they increaſe the appearance (which, without them, God knows, would be much too great) of religion being ſlighted and diſregarded; eſpecially by the upper part of the world, who ſhould be the great patterns of it.

And if this be the caſe of merely unſeaſonable diverſions; imprudent and unlawful ones are ſtill more blameable on this day: but moſt of all, that crying ſin of debauchery and intemperance, which perverts it from the ſervice of God to the ſervice of the devil; and leads perſons, more directly than almoſt any thing elſe, to utter deſtruction of body and ſoul. Therefore let us be careful, firſt to guard ourſelves againſt theſe tranſgreſſions, then to keep our children, ſervants, and dependants from the like, if we make any conſcience of doing well by them, or would have any proſpect of comfort in them. Nor let us think it ſufficient, to reſtrain them from ſpending the day ill; but to the beſt of our power and underſtanding, encourage and aſſiſt them to ſpend it well. And God grant, we may all employ in ſo right a manner, the few Sabbaths,

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and few days, which we have to come on earth; that we may *enter*, at the concluſion of them, *into* that eternal ſabbath, *that reſt, which remaineth for the people of God*, in heaven.

* Heb. iv. 3, 9.

LECTURE XXII.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

PART I.

HAVING explained the precepts of the firſt table, which ſet forth the duty of men to God; I now come to thoſe of the ſecond, which expreſs our ſeveral obligations one to another.

Now the whole law, concerning theſe matters, is briefly comprehended, as St Paul very juſtly obſerves, in this one ſaying, *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf**. Our neighbour is every one, with whom we have at any time any concern, or on whoſe welfare our actions can have any influence. For whoever is thus within our reach, is in the moſt important ſenſe near to us, however diſtant in other reſpects. To love our neighbour, is to bear him good-will; which of courſe will diſpoſe us to think favourably of him, and behave properly to him. And to *love him as ourſelves*, is to have, not only a real but a ſtrong and active good-will towards him; with a tenderneſs for his intereſts, duly proportioned to that, which we naturally feel for our own. Such a temper would moſt powerfully reſtrain us from every thing wrong, and prompt us to every thing right; and therefore is "the fulfilling of the law†," ſo far as it relates to our mutual behaviour.

But becauſe, on ſome occaſions, we may either not ſee, or not confeſs we ſee, what is right, and what otherwiſe; our Saviour hath put the ſame duty in a light ſomewhat different,

* Rom. xiii. 9. † Verſe 10.

which gives the ſafeſt, and fulleſt, and cleareſt direction for practice, that any one precept can give. "All things whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, even ſo do ye unto them *." Behaving properly depends on judging truly; and that, in caſes of any doubt, depends on hearing with due attention both ſides. To our own ſide we never fail attending. The rule therefore is, give the other ſide the ſame advantage, by ſuppoſing it your own: and after conſidering carefully and fairly, what, if it were indeed your own, you ſhould not only deſire (for deſires may be unreaſonable) but think you had an equitable claim to, and well grounded expectation of, from the other party, that do in regard to him. Would we but honeſtly take this method, our miſtakes would be ſo exceeding few, and ſlight, and innocent, that well might our bleſſed Lord add, *For this is the law and the prophets.*

Yet, after all, there might be difficulty ſometimes, eſpecially to ſome perſons, in the application of a rule ſo very general. And therefore we have, in the commandments, the reciprocal duties of man to man branched out into ſix particulars: The firſt of which, contained in the fifth commandment, relates to the mutual obligations of ſuperiors and inferiors; the reſt, to thoſe points in which all men are conſidered as equals.

It is true, the precept now to be explained, mentions only one kind of ſuperiors. *Thou ſhalt honour thy father and thy mother.* But the caſe of other ſuperiors is ſo like that of fathers, that moſt of them have occaſionally the very name of father given them in moſt languages; and therefore the regard, due to them alſo, may be very properly comprehended, and laid before you, under the ſame head. It is likewiſe true, that the duty of the inferior alone is expreſſed in the commandment; but the correſponding duty of the ſuperior is, at the ſame time, of neceſſity implied: For which reaſon I ſhall diſcourſe of both; beginning with the mutual obligations of children and parents, properly ſo called, which will be a ſufficient employment for the preſent time.

Now the duty of children to their parents is here expreſſed by the word *honour*, which in common language ſignifies a mixture of love and reſpect, producing due obedience; but in ſcripture

* Matth. vii. 12.

ſcripture language it implies further, maintenance and ſupport when wanted.

1. Love to thoſe of whoſe fleſh and blood we are, is what nature dictates to us, in the very firſt place. Children have not only received from their parents, as inſtruments in the hand of God, the original of their being; but the preſervation of it through all the years of helpleſs infancy; when the needful care of them gave much trouble, took up much time, and required much expence; all which, parents uſually go through, with ſo chearful a diligenee, and ſo ſelf-denying a tenderneſs, that no return of affection on the childrens part can poſſibly repay it to the full; though childrens affection is what, above all things, makes parents happy. Then, as life goes on, it is their parents that give or procure for them ſuch inſtruction of all kinds, as qualifies them, both to do well in this world, and be for ever bleſſed in another; that watch over them continually with never-ceaſing attention, conſulting their inclinations in a multitude of obliging inſtances, and bearing with their perverſeneſs in a multitude of provoking ones; kindly reſtraining them from a thouſand pernicious follies, into which they would otherwiſe fall; and directing their heedleſs footſteps in the right way; encouraging, rewarding, and, which indeed is no leſs a benefit, correcting them alſo, as the caſe requires; full of ſolicitude all the while for their happineſs, and conſuming themſelves with labour and thoughtfulneſs for theſe dear objects, to improve, ſupport and advance them in their lives, and provide for them at their deaths. Even thoſe parents, who perform theſe duties but imperfectly, who perhaps do ſome very wrong things, do notwithſtanding, almoſt all of them, ſo many right and meritorious ones; that though, the more ſuch they do, the better they ſhould be loved; yet they that do leaſt, do enough to be loved ſincerely for it as long as they live*.

2. And with love muſt ever be joined, ſecondly, due reſpect, inward and outward. For parents are not only the benefactors, but in rank the betters, and in right the governors, of their children; whoſe dependance is upon them, in point of intereſt, generally; in point of duty always. They ought therefore to think of them with great reverence, and treat them

* See Xenophon's Memoirs of Socrates, l. 2. c. 2.

them with every mark of ſubmiſſion, in geſture, in ſpeech, in the whole of their behaviour, which the practice of wiſe and good perſons hath eſtabliſhed, as proper inſtances of filial regard. And though the parents be mean in ſtation, or low in underſtanding; ſtill the relation continues, and the duty that belongs to it. Nay, ſuppoſe they be faulty in ſome part of their conduct or character, yet children ſhould be very backward to ſee this: and it can very ſeldom be allowable for them to ſhow that they ſee it. From the world they ſhould always conceal it, as far as they can; for it is ſhocking beyond meaſure in *them* to publiſh it. And if ever any thing of this nature muſt be mentioned to the parents themſelves, which nothing but great neceſſity can warrant or excuſe; it ſhould be with all poſſible gentleneſs and modeſty, and the moſt real concern at being obliged to ſo unnatural an office.

3. Love and reſpect to parents will always produce obedience to them: a third duty of the higheſt importance. Children, for a conſiderable time, are utterly unqualified to govern themſelves; and ſo long as this continues to be the caſe, muſt be abſolutely and implicitely governed by thoſe, who can alone claim a title to it. As they grow up to the uſe of underſtanding indeed, reaſon ſhould be gradually mixed with authority, in every thing that is required of them. But at the ſame time, children may eaſily obſerve what they may eaſily find to be true in daily inſtances, that they are apt to think they know how to direct themſelves, much ſooner than they really do; and ſhould therefore ſubmit to be directed by their friends in more points, and for a longer time, than perhaps they would naturally be tempted to wiſh. Suppoſe in that part of your lives which is already paſt, you had had your own way in every thing, what would have been the conſequences! You yourſelves muſt ſee very bad ones. Why, other perſons ſee, what you will ſee alſo in time, that it would be full as bad, were you to have your way now. And what all who are likely to know, agree in, you would believe, and ſubmit to. Your parents and governors have at leaſt more knowledge and experience, if they have not more capacity, than you. And the trouble which they take, and the concern which they feel about you, plainly ſhow that your good is the thing which they have at heart. The only reaſon why they do not

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indulge you in the particulars that you wiſh, is, that they ſee it would hurt you. And it is a dreadful venture for you, to think, as yet, of truſting yourſelves. Truſt therefore to thoſe, whom you have all manner of reaſon to truſt; and obey them willingly, who by the laws of God and man, have a right to rule you; and, generally ſpeaking, a power to make you obey at laſt, be you ever ſo unwilling.

Not that children are bound to obedience, in all things, without exception. Should a parent command them to lie, to ſteal, to commit any wickedneſs; God commands the contrary; and he is to be obeyed, not man. Or ſhould a parent command any thing of conſequence, directly oppoſite to the laws of the land, and the injunctions of public authority: here the magiſtrate, being the ſuperior power, in all things that confeſſedly belong to juriſdiction, is to be obeyed, rather than the parent, who ought himſelf to be ſubject to the magiſtrate *. Or if, in other points, a parent would require what was both very evidently and very greatly, unſuitable to a child's condition and ſtation; or had a clear tendency to make him miſerable; or would be certainly and conſiderably prejudicial to him through the remainder of his life: where the one goes ſo far beyond his juſt bounds, the other may allowably excuſe himſelf from complying. Only the caſe muſt be both ſo plain, and withal of ſuch moment, as may juſtify him, not only in his own judgment, which may eaſily be prejudiced, but in that of every conſiderate perſon, whom he hath opportunity of conſulting, and in the general opinion of mankind. And even then, the refuſal muſt be accompanied with the greateſt decency and humility; and the ſtricteſt care to make amends, by all inſtances of real duty, for this one ſeeming want of duty.

In proportion as young perſons approach to that age, when the law allows them to be capable of governing themſelves, they become by degrees leſs and leſs ſubject to the government of their parents; eſpecially in ſmaller matters; for in the more important concerns of life, and above all, in the very important one of marriage, not only daughters, (concerning whom, the very phraſe of *giving them in marriage*, ſhows, that they are not to give themſelves as they pleaſe) but ſons too,

* See Taylor's elements of civil law, p. 387, 388, 389.

too, ſhould have all poſſible regard to the authority, the judgement, the bleſſing, the comfort of thoſe to whom they owe every thing. And even after they are ſent out into the world, to ſtand on their own bottom, ſtill they remain for ever bound not to ſlight them; but in all proper affairs, to conſult with them, and hearken to them; as far as it can be at all expected, in reaſon or gratitude, that they ſhould.

4. The laſt thing, which in ſcripture phraſe of honouring parents comprehends, is affording them decent relief and ſupport, if they are reduced to want it. For thus our Saviour explains the word, in his reproof of the Phariſees, for "making this commandment of no effect by their tradition. God commanded, Honour thy father and thy mother: but ye ſay, whoſoever ſhall ſay to his father or mother, it is a gift, by whatſoever thou mighteſt be profited by me:" that is, what ſhould have relieved you, I have devoted to religious uſes; whoſoever ſhall ſay this, and "honoureth not his father or his mother; he ſhall be free*." In St Mark it is, "Ye ſuffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother†." And in other places of ſcripture, beſides this, honouring a perſon ſignifies contributing to his maintenance: as 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. "Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, eſpecially they who labour in the word and doctrine; for the ſcripture ſaith, the labourer is worthy of his reward."

How worthy parents are of this, as well as the other ſorts of honour, when they need it, ſufficiently appears from all that hath been ſaid. If they deſerve to be loved and reſpected; ſurely they are not to be left expoſed to diſtreſs and want, by thoſe whom they have brought into life; and for whom they have done ſo much: but children, even if they are poor, ſhould both be diligent in working, and provident in ſaving, to keep their helpleſs parents from extremities: and if they are in competent good circumſtances, ſhould allow them a liberal ſhare of the plenty which they enjoy themſelves. Accordingly St Paul directs, that both *children* and *nephews*, that is, grand-children, for ſo the word *nephew* always means in ſcripture, ſhould "learn firſt to ſhow piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God."

* Matth. xv. 4,—6. † Mark vii. 12.

God*." Indeed nature, as well as Chriſtianity, enjoins it ſo ſtrongly, that the whole world cries out ſhame, where it is neglected. And the ſame reaſon, which requires parents to be aſſiſted in their neceſſities, requires children alſo to attend upon them, and miniſter to them, with vigilant aſſiduity and tender affection, in their infirmities; and to conſult, on every occaſion, their deſires, their peace, their eaſe. And they ſhould conſider both what they contribute to their ſupport, and every other inſtance of regard, which they ſhow them, not as an alms, given to an inferior: but as a tribute of duty paid to a ſuperior. For which reaſon perhaps it may be, that relieving them is mentioned in ſcripture under the notion of honouring them.

One thing more to be obſerved, is, that all theſe duties of children belong equally to both parents; the mother being as expreſsly named as the father, in the commandment; and having the ſame right in point of reaſon. Only, if contrary orders are given by the two parents to the child; he is bound to obey that parent rather, whom the other is bound to obey alſo: but ſtill preſerving to each all due reverence: from which nothing, not even the command of either, can diſcharge him†.

And now I proceed to the duties of parents to their children: on which there is much leſs need to enlarge, than on the other. For not only parents have more underſtanding to know their duty, and ſtronger affections to prompt them to do it: but indeed, a great part of it hath been already intimated, in ſetting forth that of children to them. It is the duty of parents, to take all that kind care, which is the main foundation of love; to keep up ſuch authority, as may ſecure reſpect; to give ſuch reaſonable commands, as may engage a willing obedience: and thus to make their children ſo good, and themſelves ſo eſteemed by them, that they may depend, in caſe of need, on aſſiſtance and ſuccour from them.

More particularly, they are bound to think them, from the firſt, worthy of their own inſpection and pains; and not abandon them to the negligence, or bad management of others: ſo to be tender of them, and indulge them, as not to encourage

* 1 Tim. v. 4. † Pietas Parentibus, et ſi inæqualis eſt eorum poteſtas, æqua debebitur. D. 37. 10. 4.

their faults; ſo to reprove and correct them, as not to break their ſpirits, or provoke their hatred; to inſtil into them the knowledge, and require of them the practice, of their duty to God and man; and recommend to them every precept, both of religion and morality, by what is the ſtrongeſt recommendation, a good and amiable example: to breed them up as ſuitably to their condition, as may be; but to be ſure not above it; watching over them with all the care that conduces to health; but allowing them in none of the ſoftneſs that produces luxury or indolence; or of the needleſs diſtinctions that pamper pride: to begin preparing them early, according to their future ſtation in life, for being uſeful in it, to others and themſelves: to provide conſcientiouſly for their ſpiritual and eternal, as well as temporal good, in diſpoſing of them; and beſtow on them willingly, as ſoon as it is fit, whatever may be requiſite to ſettle them properly in the world: to lay up for them, not by injuſtice, penuriouſneſs, or immoderate ſolicitude, all that they can; but by honeſt and prudent diligence and attention, as much as is ſufficient; and to diſtribute this amongſt them, not as fondneſs, or reſentment, or caprice, or vanity, may dictate; but in a reaſonable and equitable manner; ſuch as will be likelieſt to make thoſe who receive it, love one another, and eſteem the memory of the giver.

Theſe are, in brief, the mutual duties of parents and children: and you will eaſily perceive that they are the duties, in proportion, of all who by any occaſional, or accidental means, come to ſtand in the ſtead of parents or of children. The main thing which wants to be obſerved, is, that from the neglect of theſe duties on one ſide, or on both, proceeds a very great part of the wickedneſs and miſery, that is in the world. May God incline the hearts of all that are concerned either way in this moſt important relation, ſo to practiſe the ſeveral obligations of it, as may procure to them, in this world, reciprocal ſatisfaction and joy, and eternal felicity in that which is to come, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

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LECTURE XXIII.

The Fifth Commandment.

PART II.

IN my laſt diſcourſe I began to explain the fifth commandment: and having already gone through the duties of children and parents, properly ſo called, I come now to the other ſorts of inferiors and ſuperiors: all which have ſometimes the ſame names given them, and are comprehended under the reaſon and equity of this precept.

And here, the firſt relation to be mentioned, is, that between private ſubjects and thoſe in authority over them: a relation ſo very like that of children and fathers, that the duties on both ſides are much the ſame in each.

But, more particularly, the duty of ſubjects, is, to obey the laws of whatever government Providence hath placed us under, in every thing which is not contrary to the laws of God; and to contribute willingly to its ſupport, every thing that is legally required, or may be reaſonably expected of us: to be faithful and true to the intereſts of that ſociety, of which we are members; and to the perſons of thoſe who govern it; paying, both to the Supreme Power, and all ſubordinate magiſtrates, every part of that ſubmiſſion and reſpect, both in ſpeech and behaviour, which is their due; and making all thoſe allowances in their favour which the difficulty of their office, and the frailty of our common nature, demand: to love and wiſh well to all our fellow-ſubjects, without exception; think of them charitably, and treat them kindly; to be peaceable and quiet, each minding diligently the duties of his own ſtation; not factious and turbulent, intruding into the concerns of others; to be modeſt and humble, *not exerciſing ourſelves in matters too high for us* *; but leaving ſuch things to the care of

* Pſalm cxxxi. 1.

our ſuperiors, and the providence of God: to be thankful for the bleſſings and advantages of government, in proportion as we enjoy them; and reaſonable and patient under the burdens and inconveniencies of it, which at any time we may ſuffer.'

The duty of princes and magiſtrates, it would be of little uſe to enlarge on at preſent. In general it is, to confine the exerciſe of their power within the limits of thoſe laws, to which they are bound; and direct it to the attainment of thoſe ends, for which they were appointed: to execute their proper function with care and integrity, as *men fearing God, men of truth, hating covetouſneſs* *; to do all perſons impartial juſtice, and conſult, in all caſes, the public benefit; encouraging religion and virtue with zeal, eſpecially by a good example; puniſhing crimes with ſteadineſs, yet with moderation; and *ſtudying to preſerve the people committed to their charge, in wealth, peace, and godlineſs* †.

Another relation, to be brought under this commandment, is, that between ſpiritual fathers, the teachers of religion, and ſuch as are to be taught.

The duty of us who have undertaken the important work of ſpiritual guides and teachers, is, to deliver the doctrines and precepts of our holy religion, in the plaineſt and ſtrongeſt terms that we can; inſiſting on ſuch things chiefly, as will be moſt conducive to the real and inward benefit of our hearers; and recommending them, in the moſt prudent and perſuaſive manner; *ſeeking to pleaſe all men for their good, to edification* ‡: but fearing no man in the diſcharge of our conſciences; and neither ſaying nor omitting any thing, for the ſake of applauſe from the many, or the few; or of promoting either our own wealth and power, or that of our order: to inſtruct, exhort, and comfort, all that are placed under our care, with ſincerity, diſcretion, and tenderneſs, privately as well as publicly, ſo far as they give us opportunity, or we diſcern hope of doing ſervice; *watching for the ſouls, as they that muſt give account* §; to rule in the church of God with vigilance, humility, and meekneſs, *ſhowing ourſelves, in all things, patterns of good works* ‖.

The

* Exod. xviii. 21. † Communion Office. ‡ Rom. xv. 2. 1 Cor. x. 33. § Heb. xiii. 17. ‖ Tit. ii. 7.

The duty of you, the Chriſtian Laity, whom we are to teach is, to attend conſtantly and ſeriouſly on religious worſhip and inſtruction, as a ſacred ordinance appointed by Heaven for your ſpiritual improvement; to conſider impartially and carefully what you hear, and believe, and practiſe what you are convinced you ought; to obſerve with due regard the rules eſtabliſhed for decent order and edification in the church; and pay ſuch reſpect, in word and deed, to thoſe who miniſter to you in holy things, as the intereſt and honour of religion require; accepting and encouraging our well-meant ſervices, and bearing charitably with our many imperfections and failings.

A third relation is, that between maſters or miſtreſſes of ſchools and their ſcholars. The duty of the former is, diligently to inſtruct the children committed to them, in all the things which they are put to learn, ſuiting their manner of teaching, as well as they can, to the temper and capacity of each; and to take effectual care that they apply themſelves to what is taught them, and do their beſt; to watch over their behaviour, eſpecially in the great points of honeſty and truth, modeſty and good-humour; ſhow countenance to ſuch as are well-behaved and promiſing; correct the faulty with needful, yet not with exceſſive ſeverity; and get the incorrigible removed out of the way, before they corrupt others. And the duty of the ſcholars is, to reverence and obey their maſter or miſtreſs, as if they were their parents; to live friendly and lovingly with one another, as brethren or ſiſters; to be heartily thankful to all, that give or procure them ſo valuable a bleſſing as uſeful knowledge; and induſtrious to improve in it; conſidering, how greatly their happineſs, here and hereafter, depends upon it.

I come now to a fourth relation, of great extent and importance, that between heads of families and their ſervants.

When the New Teſtament was written, the generality of ſervants were, as in many places they are ſtill, mere ſlaves; and the perſons to whom they belonged, had a right to their labour, and that of their poſterity, for ever, without giving them any other wages than their maintenance; and with a power to inflict on them what puniſhments they pleaſed; for the moſt part, even death itſelf, if they would. God be thanked, ſervice amongſt us, is a much happier thing; the conditions

tions of it being uſually no other, than the ſervants themſelves voluntarily enter into, for their own benefit. But then, for that reaſon, they ought to perform whatever is due from them, both more conſcientiouſly, and more chearfully.

Now from ſervants is due, in the firſt place, obedience. Indeed if they are commanded what is plainly unlawful, they *ought to obey God rather than men* *; but ſtill muſt excuſe themſelves decently, though reſolutely. And even lawful things, which they have not bargained to do, they are not obliged to do; nor any thing indeed, which is clearly and greatly unſuitable to their place and ſtation, and improper to be required of them. But whatever they engaged, or knew they were expected to do; or what, though they did not know of it beforehand, is uſual and reaſonable, or even not very unreaſonable, they muſt ſubmit to. For if they may, on every ſmall pretence, refuſe to do *this*, and queſtion whether *that* belongs to their place, it is moſt evident, that all authority and order in families muſt be at an end: and they themſelves will have much more trouble in diſputing about their buſineſs, than they would have in performing it.

Servants therefore ſhould obey; and they ſhould do it reſpectfully and readily; not murmuring, behaving gloomily and ſullenly, as if their work were not due for their wages; but, as the apoſtle exhorts, *with good-will doing ſervice* †; *not anſwering again* ‡, and contradicting, as if thoſe, whom they ſerve, were their equals; but paying all fit honour to their maſter or miſtreſs, and to every one in the family.

They are alſo to obey with diligence: To ſpend as much time in work, and follow it as cloſely all that time, as can be fairly expected from them; *not with eye-ſervice as men pleaſers*, (theſe are the words of ſcripture, twice repeated there) *but in ſingleneſs of heart, fearing God* §. Whatever induſtry therefore a reaſonable maſter would require, when his eye is upon them: the ſame, in the main, honeſt ſervants will uſe, when his eye is not upon them: For his preſence or abſence can make no difference in their duty. He hath agreed with them for their time and pains; and he muſt not be defrauded of them.

With diligence muſt always be joined care, that no buſineſs be neglected, or delayed beyond its proper ſeaſon; nothing miſmanaged for want of thinking about it; nothing heedleſsly,

* Acts v. 29. † Eph. vi. 7. ‡ Tit. ii. 9. § Eph. vi. 6. Col. iii. 22.

ly, much leſs deſignedly, waſted and ſquandered; but all reaſonable frugality and good contrivance ſhown; and all fair advantages taken, yet no other, for the benefit of thoſe who employ them. Every ſervant would think this but common juſtice in his own caſe; and therefore ſhould do it as common juſtice in his maſter's caſe. Some perhaps may imagine, that their maſter's eſtate or income is well able to afford them to be careleſs or extravagant. But the truth is, few or no incomes can afford this. For if it be practiſed in one thing, why not in another? And what muſt follow, if it be practiſed in all? That certainly which we daily ſee, that perſons of the greateſt eſtates are diſtreſſed and ruined by it. Or though it would not diſtreſs them all, yet a maſter's wealth is no more a juſtification of ſervants waſting what belongs to him, than of their ſtealing it: And if the one be diſhoneſt, the other muſt.

Now diſhoneſty every body owns to be a crime: but every body doth not conſider ſufficiently how many ſorts of it there are. Obſerve then, that, beſides the inſtances already mentioned, and the groſs ones that are puniſhable by law, it is diſhoneſt in a ſervant, either to take to himſelf, or give to another, or conſent to the taking or giving, whatever he knows he is not allowed, and durſt not do with his maſter's knowledge. There are, to be ſure, various degrees of this fault; ſome not near ſo bad as others: but it is the ſame kind of fault in all of them: beſides that the ſmaller degrees lead to the greater. And all diſhoneſty, bad as it is in other perſons, is yet worſe in thoſe who are intruſted, as ſervants are; and things put in their power upon that truſt; which if they break, they are unfaithful, as well as unjuſt.

Another ſort of diſhoneſty is ſpeaking falſehoods: Againſt which I have already, in the courſe of theſe lectures, given ſome cautions, and ſhall give more: therefore at preſent I ſhall only ſay, that, whether ſervants are guilty of it amongſt themſelves, or to their maſters or miſtreſſes, whether againſt or in favour of one another, or even in their own favour, there are few things, by which they may both do and ſuffer more harm than a lying tongue.

Truth therefore is a neceſſary quality in ſervants. And a further one is proper ſecrecy. For there is great unfairneſs in betraying the ſecrets, either of their maſter's buſineſs,

or

or his family; or turning to his diſadvantage any thing that comes to their knowledge by being employed under him; unleſs it be where conſcience obliges them to a diſcovery; which is a caſe that ſeldom happens. And, excepting that caſe, what they have promiſed to conceal, it is palpable wickedneſs to diſcloſe: And where they have not promiſed, yet they are taken into their maſter's houſe to be aſſiſtants and friends, not ſpies and tale-bearers; to do ſervice, not harm, to him, and to every one that is under his roof.

Two other duties, of all perſons indeed, but in ſome meaſure peculiarly of ſervants, are: ſobriety, without which they can neither be careful nor diligent, nor will be likely to continue juſt; and chaſtity, the want of which will produce all manner of diſorders and miſchiefs in the family to which they belong, and utter ruin to themſelves.

The laſt requiſite, which I ſhall mention, is peaceableneſs and good temper, agreeing with and helping one another, and making the work, which they have to do, eaſy, and the lives which they are to lead together, comfortable. For it is very unfit, that either their maſters or any other part of the family ſhould ſuffer through their ill-humour: and indeed they ſuffer enough by it themſelves, to make reſtraining it well worth their while.

Theſe are the duties of ſervants: and as the faithful performance of them is the ſureſt way of ſerving themſelves, and being happy in this world; ſo, if it proceed from a true principle of conſcience, God will accept it, as ſervice done to himſelf, and make them eternally happy for it in the next: whereas wilfully tranſgreſſing, or negligently ſlighting, the things which they ought to do, whatever pleaſure, or whatever advantage it may promiſe or produce to them for a while, will ſeldom fail of bringing them at laſt to ſhame and ruin even here, and will certainly bring them, unleſs they repent and amend, to miſery hereafter.

But think not, I entreat you, that we will lay burthens on thoſe below us, and take none upon ourſelves. There are duties alſo, and very neceſſary ones, which maſters and miſtreſſes owe to their ſervants.

To behave towards them with meekneſs and gentleneſs, not imperiouſly and with contempt; and to reſtrain them as far as may be, from giving bad uſage one to another; never to accuſe,

cuſe, threaten, or ſuſpect them, without or beyond reaſon; to hear patiently their defences and complaints; and bear, with due moderation, their miſtakes and faults: neither to make them when in health, work or fare harder than is fitting; nor ſuffer them, when in ſickneſs, to want any thing requiſite for their comfort and relief: if they be hired ſervants, to pay their wages fully and punctually at the time agreed: if they are put to learn any buſineſs or profeſſion, to inſtruct them in it carefully and thoroughly: not only to give them time for the exerciſes of religion; but aſſiſtance to underſtand, and encouragement to practiſe, every part of their duty: to keep them, as much as poſſible, both from ſin and temptation, and particularly from corrupting each other: to ſhow diſpleaſure, when they do amiſs, as far, and no farther than the caſe requires; and to countenance and reward them, when they ſerve well, in proportion to the merit and length of ſuch ſervice. For all theſe things are natural dictates of reaſon and humanity; and clearly implied in that comprehenſive rule of ſcripture: *Maſters, give unto your ſervants that which is juſt and equal; knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in heaven* *.

There are ſtill two ſorts more, of inferiors and ſuperiors, that may properly be mentioned under this commandment: young perſons and elder; thoſe of low and high degree.

The duty of the younger is, to moderate their own raſhneſs and love of pleaſure; to reverence the perſons and advice of the aged; and neither uſe them ill, nor deſpiſe them, on account of the infirmities that may accompany advanced years; conſidering in what manner they will expect hereafter that others ſhould treat them. And the duty of elder perſons is, to make all fit allowances, but no hurtful ones, to the natural diſpoſitions of young people: to inſtruct them with patience, and reprove them with mildneſs; not to require either too much or too long ſubmiſſion from them; but be willing that they, in their turn, ſhould come forward into the world; gradually withdrawing themſelves from the heavier cares, and the lighter pleaſures of this life; and waiting with pious reſignation to be called into another.

The duty of the lower part of the world to thoſe above them, in rank, fortune, or office, is, not to envy them; or murmur

* Col. iv. 1.

at the ſuperiority, which a wife, though myſterious, Providence hath given them; but *in whatever ſtate they are, therewith to be content* *; and pay willingly to others all the reſpect, which decency or cuſtom have made their due. At the ſame time, the duty of thoſe in higher life is, to relieve the poor, protect the injured, countenance the good, diſcourage the bad, as they have opportunity; not to ſcorn, much leſs to oppreſs, the meaneſt of their brethren; but to remember, that *we ſhall all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt* †; where *he that doth wrong, ſhall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no reſpect of perſons* ‡.

And now, were but all theſe duties conſcientiouſly obſerved by all the world, how happy a place would it be! And whoever will faithfully do their own part of them, they ſhall be happy, whether others will do theirs or not; and this commandment aſſures them of it; *that thy days may be long in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* In all probability, if we obey his laws, and that now before us in particular, both longer and more proſperous will our days prove in this land of our pilgrimage, in which God hath placed us to ſojourn; but, without all queſtion, eternal and infinite ſhall our felicity be, in that land of promiſe, the heavenly Canaan, which he hath appointed for our inheritance; and which that we may all inherit accordingly, He of his mercy grant, *&c.*

* Phil. iv. 11. † Rom. xiv. 10. ‡ Col. iii. 25.

LECTURE XXIV.

The Sixth Commandment.

HAVING ſet before you, under the fifth commandment, the particular duties, which inferiors and ſuperiors owe each to the other; I proceed now to thoſe remaining precepts, which expreſs the general duties of all men to all men.

Amongſt

Amongſt theſe, as life is the foundation of every thing valuable to us, the preſervation of it is juſtly intitled to the firſt place. And accordingly the ſixth commandment is, *Thou ſhalt do no murder.* Murder is taking away a perſon's life, with deſign, and without authority. Unleſs both concur, it doth not deſerve that name.

1. It is not murder, unleſs it be with deſign. He, who is duly careful to avoid doing harm, and unhappily, notwithſtanding that, kills another, though he hath cauſe to be extremely ſorry for it, yet is entirely void of guilt on account of it. For his will having no ſhare in the action, it is not, in a moral ſenſe, his. But if he doth the miſchief through heedleſſneſs, or levity of mind, or inconſiderate vehemence, here is a fault. If the likelihood of miſchief could be foreſeen, the fault is greater; and the higheſt degree of ſuch negligence, or impetuous raſhneſs, comes near to bad intention.

2. It is not murder, unleſs it be without authority. Now a perſon hath authority, from the law both of God and man, to defend his own life, if he cannot do it otherwiſe, by the death of whoever attacks it unjuſtly: whoſe deſtruction, in that caſe, is of his own ſeeking, and *his blood on his own head* *. But nothing, ſhort of the moſt imminent danger, ought ever to carry us to ſuch an extremity: and a good perſon will ſpare ever ſo bad a one, as far as he can with any proſpect of ſafety. Again, proper magiſtrates have authority to ſentence offenders to death, on ſufficient proof of ſuch crimes as the welfare of the community requires to be thus puniſhed; and to employ others in the execution of that ſentence. And private perſons have authority, and in proper circumſtances are obliged, to ſeize and proſecute ſuch offenders: for all this is only another ſort of ſelf-defence; defending the public from what elſe would be pernicious to it. And the ſcripture hath ſaid, that the Sovereign Power *beareth not the ſword in vain* †. But in whatever caſes gentler puniſhments would ſufficiently anſwer the ends of government, ſurely capital ones are forbidden by this commandment. Self-defence, in the laſt place, authoriſes whole nations to make war upon other nations, when it is the only way to obtain redreſs of injuries, which cannot be ſupported; or ſecurity againſt impending ruin. To

* 2 Sam. i. 16. 1 Kin. ii. 37. Ezek. xxxiii. 4. † Rom. xiii. 4.

determine, whether the ſtate is indeed in theſe unhappy circumſtances, belongs to the ſupreme juriſdiction: and the queſtion ought to be conſidered very conſcientiouſly. For wars, begun or continued without neceſſity, are unchriſtian and inhuman: as many murders are committed, as lives are loſt in them; beſides the innumerable ſins and miſeries of other ſorts with which they are always attended. But ſubjects, in their private capacity, are incompetent judges of what is requiſite for the public weal: nor can the guardians of it permit them to act upon their judgment, were they to make one. Therefore they may lawfully ſerve in wars, which their ſuperiors have unlawfully undertaken, excepting perhaps ſuch offenſive wars as are notoriouſly unjuſt. In others, it is no more the buſineſs of the ſoldiery to conſider the grounds of their ſovereign's taking up arms, than it is the buſineſs of the executioner to examine whether the magiſtrate hath paſſed a right ſentence.

You ſee then, in what caſes killing is not murder: in all, but theſe, it is. And you cannot fail of ſeeing the guilt of this crime to be ſingularly great and heinous. It brings deſignedly upon one of our brethren, without cauſe, what human nature abhors and dreads moſt. It cuts him off from all the enjoyments of this life at once, and ſends him into another, for which poſſibly he was not yet prepared. It defaces the image, and defeats the deſign, of God. It overturns the great purpoſe of government and laws, mutual ſafety. It robs the ſociety of a member, and conſequently of part of its ſtrength. It robs the relations, friends, and dependents, of the perſon deſtroyed, of every benefit and pleaſure, which elſe they might have had from him. And the injury done, in all theſe reſpects, hath the terrible aggravation, that it cannot be recalled. Moſt wiſely therefore hath our Creator ſurrounded murder with a peculiar horror; that nature, as well as reaſon, may deter from it every one, who is not utterly abandoned to the worſt of wickedneſs: and moſt juſtly hath he appointed the ſons of Noah, that is, all mankind, to puniſh death with death. *Whoſo ſheddeth man's blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed; for in the image of God made he man**. And that nothing may protect ſo daring an offender, he enjoined the Jews, in the chapter which

* Gen. ix. 6.

which follows the ten commandments; "If a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour to slay him with guile, thou shalt take him from mine altar that he may die*." But supposing, what seldom happens, that the murderer may escape judicial vengeance; yet what piercing reflections, what continual terrors and alarms must he carry about with him! And could he be hardened against these, it would only subject him the more inevitably to that future condemnation, from which nothing but the deepest repentance can possibly exempt him. For "no murderer hath eternal life†;" but they "shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death ‡."

But shocking, and deserving of punishment here and hereafter, as this crime always is; yet there are circumstances, which may augment it greatly. If the person, whom any one deprives of life, be placed in lawful authority over him; or united in relation or friendship to him; or have done him kindnesses; or only never have done him harm; or be, in a peculiar degree, good, useful, or pitiable; each of these things considerably increases the sin, though some indeed more than others. Again, if the horrid fact be formally contrived, and perhaps the design carried on through a length of time; this argues a much more steady and inflexible depravity of heart, than the commission of it in a sudden rage. But still, even the last, though it hath, in the law of this country, a different name, of man-slaughter, given it, and a different punishment prescribed for the first offence; yet in the sight of God is as truly murder as the former, though freer from aggravations. The mischief done is done purposely; and neither passion, nor provocation, gives authority for doing it, or even any great excuse. For as God hath required us, he hath certainly enabled us, to restrain the hastiest sallies of our anger, especially from such enormities as this.

Nor doth it materially alter the nature, or lessen at all the degree of the sin, if, whilst we attack another, we give him an opportunity to defend himself, and attack us: as in duelling. Still taking away his life is murder: exposing our own is so likewise; as I shall quickly show you. And an appointment of two persons to meet for this purpose, under pretence of being

* Exod. xxi. 14. † 1 John iii. 15. ‡ Rev. xxi. 8.

ing bound to it by their honour, is an agreement in form to commit, for the ſake of an abſurd notion, or rather an unmeaning word, the moſt capital offence againſt each other, and their Maker; of which, if their intention ſucceed, they cannot have time to repent.

As to the manner in which murder is committed; whether a perſon do it directly himſelf, or employ another; whether he do it by force, or fraud, or colour of juſtice; accuſing falſely, or taking any unfair advantage: theſe things make little further difference in the guilt, than that the moſt artful and ſtudied way is generally the worſt.

And though a deſign of murder ſhould not take effect; yet whoever hath done all that he could towards it, is plainly as much a ſinner, as if it had. Nay, doing any thing towards it, or ſo much as once intending it, or aſſiſting or encouraging any other who intends it, is the ſame ſort of wickedneſs. And if a perſon doth not directly deſign the death of another; yet if he deſignedly doth what he knows or ſuſpects may probably occaſion it; he is, in proportion to his knowledge, or ſuſpicion, guilty. Nay, if he is only negligent in matters, which may affect human life; or meddles with them, when he hath cauſe to think he underſtands them not; he is far from innocent. And there are ſeveral profeſſions and employments, in which theſe truths ought to be conſidered with a peculiar degree of ſerioufneſs.

Further yet: If it be criminal to contribute in any manner towards taking away a perſon's life immediately; it muſt be criminal alſo to contribute any thing towards ſhortening it, which is taking it away after a time: whether by bringing any bodily diſeaſe upon him, or cauſing him any grief or anxiety of mind, or by what indeed will produce both, diſtreſſing him in his circumſtances: concerning which the ſon of Sirach ſaith: *He that taketh away his neighbour's living ſlayeth him; and he that defraudeth the labourer of his hire, is a blood-ſhedder**.

Indeed, if we cauſe or procure any ſort of hurt to another, tho' it hath no tendency to deprive him of life, yet if it makes any part of his life, more or leſs, uneaſy or uncomfortable, we deprive him ſo far of what makes it valuable to him: which is

* Eccluſ. xxxiv. 22.

is equivalent to taking ſo much of it away from him, or poſſibly worſe.

Nay, if we do a perſon no harm; yet if we wiſh him harm, St John hath determined the caſe: *Whoſoever hateth his brother is a murderer* *. For indeed, hatred not only leads to murder; and too often, when indulged, produces it unexpectedly; but it is always, though perhaps for the moſt part in a lower degree, the very ſpirit of murder in the heart; and it is by our hearts that God will judge us. Nay, ſhould our diſlike of another not riſe to fixed hatred and malice; yet if it riſe to unjuſt anger, we know our Saviour's declaration. *It was ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not kill: and whoſoever ſhall kill, ſhall be in danger of the judgment. But I ſay unto you, whoſoever is angry with his brother without a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the judgment* †. That is, whoſoever is angry, either with perſons that he ought not, or more vehemently, or ſooner, or longer than he ought, is guilty, in ſome meaſure, of that uncharitableneſs of which murder is the higheſt act; and liable to the puniſhment of it in the ſame proportion.

Nor even yet have I carried the explanation of this commandment to the extent of our duty. Whoever doth not, as far as can be reaſonably expected from him, endeavour to guard his neighbour from harm, to make peace, to relieve diſtreſs and want, fails of what love to human kind certainly requires. Now, *love is the fulfilling of the law* ‡: and *he that loveth not his brother, abideth in death* §;

We are alſo carefully to obſerve, that however heinous it is, to ſin againſt the temporal life of any one; injuring him in reſpect of his eternal intereſts, is yet unſpeakably worſe. If it be unlawful to kill or hurt the body, or overlook mens worldly neceſſities; much more is it to *deſtroy* the ſoul of *our brother, for whom Chriſt died* ‖; or any way endanger it; or even ſuffer it to continue in danger, if we have in our power the proper and likely means of delivering it. And on the other hand, all that mercy and humanity, which, in the civil concerns of our neighbours, is ſo excellent a duty, muſt proportionably be ſtill more excellent in their religious ones, and of higher value in the ſight of God.

Hitherto

* 1 John iii. 15. † Mat. v. 21, 22. ‡ Rom. xiii. 10.
§ 1 John iii. 14. ‖ Rom. xiv. 15.

Hitherto I have conſidered the prohibition, *Thou ſhalt do no murder*, as reſpecting others: but it forbids alſo ſelf-murder. As we are not to commit violence againſt the image of God in the perſon of any of our brethren; ſo neither in our own. As we are not to rob the ſociety to which we belong, or any part of it, of the ſervice, which any other of its members might do it; we are not to rob either of what we might do. As we are not to ſend any one elſe out of the world prematurely; we are not to ſend ourſelves; but *wait* with patience *all the days of our appointed time, till our change come**. If the ſins which perſons have committed prompt them to deſpair; they of all others, inſtead of ruſhing into the preſence of God by adding this dreadful one to them, ſhould earneſtly deſire *ſpace to repent*†; which, by his grace, the worſt of ſinners may do, and be forgiven. If their misfortunes or ſufferings make them weary of life; he hath ſent them theſe with deſign, that they ſhould not by unlawful means evade them, but go thro' them well: whether they be inflicted for the puniſhment of their faults, or the trial of their virtues. In either caſe, we are to ſubmit quietly to the diſcipline of our heavenly Father: which he will not ſuffer to be heavier than we can bear, whatever we may imagine; but will ſupport us under it, improve us by it, and in due time releaſe us from it. But in any caſe for perſons to make away with themſelves, is to arraign the conſtitution of things which he hath appointed; and to refuſe living where he hath put them to live: a very provoking inſtance of undutifulneſs, and made peculiarly fatal by this circumſtance, that leaving uſually no room for repentance, it leaves none for pardon: always excepting, where it proceeds from a mind ſo diſordered by a bodily diſeaſe, as to be incapable of judging or acting reaſonably. For God knows with certainty when this is the cauſe, and when not: and will accordingly either make due allowances, or make none.

And if deſtroying ourſelves be a ſin, doing any thing wilfully or heedleſsly, that tends to our deſtruction, muſt in proportion be a ſin. Where indeed neceſſity requires great hazards to be run by ſome perſons for the good of others: as in war, in extinguiſhing dangerous fires, in ſeveral caſes which might be named; or where employments and profeſſions which ſomebody

* Job xiv. 14 † Rev. ii. 21.

ſomebody or other muſt undertake, or ſuch diligence in any employment as men are by accidents really called to uſe, impair health and ſhorten life; there, far from being thrown away, it is laudibly ſpent in the ſervice of God and man. But for any perſon to bring on himſelf an untimely end, by adventurous raſhneſs, by ungoverned paſſion, by immoderate anxiety, or by an obſtinate or careleſs neglect of his own preſervation, is unqueſtionably ſinful. And, above all, doing it by debauchery or immoral exceſs, is a moſt effectual way of ruining ſoul and body at once.

Let us therefore be conſcientiouſly watchful againſt every thing which may provoke or entice us to be injurious, either to others or ourſelves. And God grant, that we may ſo regard the lives of our fellow-creatures, and ſo employ our own, that we may ever pleaſe the Giver and Lord of life: and having faithfully lived to him here, may eternally live with him hereafter, through Jeſus Chriſt our only Saviour. Amen.

LECTURE XXV.

The Seventh Commandment.

IN ſpeaking to this commandment, it is proper to begin with obſerving, that as in the ſixth, where murder is forbidden, every thing which tends to it, or proceeds from the ſame bad principle with it, is forbidden too: ſo here, in the ſeventh, where adultery is prohibited, the prohibition muſt be extended to whatever elſe is criminal in the ſame kind. And therefore in explaining it, I ſhall treat, firſt of the fidelity which it requires from married perſons, and then of the chaſtity and modeſty which it requires from all perſons.

Firſt of the fidelity owing to each other from married perſons.

Not only the ſcripture account of the creation of mankind is a proof to as many as believe in ſcripture, that the union of one man with one woman was the original deſign and will of Heaven; but the remarkable equality of males and females born into the world is an evidence of it to all men. Yet notwithſtanding, it muſt be owned, the cohabitation of one man with ſeveral wives at the ſame time was practiſed very anciently in the darker ages, even by ſome of the patriarchs, who were otherwiſe good perſons; but, having no explicit revealed rule concerning this matter, failed of diſcerning the above-mentioned purpoſe of God. And both this error and that of divorce on ſlight occaſions, were tolerated by the law of Moſes. But that was only as the laws of other countries often connive at what the Lawgiver is far from approving. Accordingly God expreſſed, particularly by the Prophet Malachi*, his diſlike of theſe things. And our Saviour both tells the Jews, that Moſes permitted divorces at pleaſure, merely "becauſe of the hardneſs of their hearts," and peremptorily declares, that "whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and ſhall marry another, committeth adultery†." Now certainly it cannot be leſs adulterous to marry a ſecond without putting away the firſt.

Nor is polygamy (that is, the having more wives than one at once) prohibited in holy writ alone, but condemned by many of the heathens themſelves, who alledge againſt it very plain and forcible reaſons. It is inconſiſtent with a due degree of mutual affection in the parties, and due care in the education of their children. It introduces into families perpetual ſubjects of the bittereſt enmity and jealouſy; keeps a multitude of females in moſt unnatural bondage, frequently under guardians fitted for the office by unnatural cruelty; and tempts a multitude of males, thus left unprovided for, to unnatural luſts. In civilized and well-regulated countries therefore, ſingle marriages have either been eſtabliſhed at firſt, or prevailed afterwards on experience of their preferableneſs: and a mutual promiſe of inviolable faithfulneſs to the marriage-bed hath been underſtood to be an eſſential part of the contract: which promiſe is with us moſt ſolemnly expreſſed in the office of matrimony, by as clear and comprehenſive words as can be deviſed.

* Mal. ii. 14,—16. † Mat. xix 8, 9.

fed. And unleſs perſons are at liberty in all caſes to ſlight the moſt awful vows to God, and the moſt deliberate engagements of each to the other; how can they be at liberty in this, where public good and private happineſs are ſo deeply intereſted?

Breaches of plighted faith, as they muſt be preceded by a want of ſufficient conjugal affection in the offending party, ſo they tend to extinguiſh all the remains of it: and this change will be perceived, and will give uneaſineſs to the innocent one, though the cauſe be hid. But if it be known, or merely ſuſpected by the perſon wronged, (which it ſeldom fails to be in a little time) it produces, from the make of the human mind, in warmer tempers, a reſentment ſo ſtrong, in milder, an affliction of heavy, that few things in the world equal either. *For love is ſtrong as death, jealouſy is cruel as the grave, the coals thereof are coals of fire**. And, with whatever vehemence they burn inwardly or outwardly, it can be no wonder; when perfidious unkindneſs is found in that neareſt relation, where truth and love were deliberately pledged, and ſtudiouſly paid on one ſide, in expectation of a ſuitable return; and when the tendereſt part of the enjoyment of life is given up beyond recall into the hands of a traitor, who turns it into the acuteſt miſery. To what a height grief and anger on one ſide, and neglect ripened into ſcorn and hatred on the other, may carry ſuch calamities, cannot be foreſeen: but at leaſt they utterly deſtroy that union of hearts, that reciprocal confidence, that openneſs of communication, that fameneſs of intereſts, of joys and of ſorrows, which conſtitute the principal felicity of the married ſtate. And beſides, how very frequently do the conſequences of theſe tranſgreſſions affect, and even ruin, the health or the fortune, it may be both, of the blameleſs perſon in common with the other: and perhaps derive down diſeaſes and poverty to ſucceſſive generations!

Theſe are fruits which unfaithfulneſs in either party may produce. In one it may produce yet more. A woman, guilty of this crime, who, to uſe the words of ſcripture, *forſaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God* †, brings peculiar diſgrace on her huſband, her children, and friends; and may bring an illegitimate offſpring to inherit

* Cant. viii. 6. † Prov. ii. 17.

what is the right of others; nor is the infamy and punishment, to which she exposes herself, a less dreadful evil for being a deserved one. And if falsehood on the mens part hath not all the same aggravations, it hath very great ones in their stead. They are almost constantly the tempters: they often carry on their wicked designs for a long time together: they too commonly use the vilest means to accomplish them. And as they claim the strictest fidelity, it is ungenerous, as well as unjust, to fail of paying it. All men must feel how bitter it would be to them to be injured in this respect; let them think then what it is to be injurious in it: and since the crime is the same when committed by them, as when committed against them, let them own that it deserves the same condemnation from the Judge of the world. *The Lord hath been witness*, saith the Prophet, *between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou dealest treacherously; yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth* *.

It will be safest, but I hope it is not necessary, to add, that an unmarried man or woman, offending with the wife or husband of any one, being no less guilty of adultery than the person with whom the offence is committed, is consequently an accomplice in all the wickedness and all the mischief abovementioned; and this frequently with aggravating circumstances of the greatest baseness, and treachery, and ingratitude, and cruelty, that can be imagined. Whatever some may plead, surely none can think such behaviour defensible; and most surely they will not find it so: for *marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge* †.

The crime of adultery being so great, it follows, that all improper familiarities, which, though undesignedly, may lead to adultery, and all imprudent behaviour which may give suspicion of it, is to be avoided as matter of conscience; that all groundless jealousy is to be checked by those who are inclined to it, and discouraged by others, as most heinous injustice; and that every thing should be carefully observed by both parties, which may endear them to each other. No persons therefore should ever enter into the marriage-bond with such

* Mal. ii. 14, 15. † Heb. xiii. 4.

ſuch as they cannot eſteem and love; and all perſons who have entered into it, ſhould uſe all means, not only to preſerve eſteem and love, but to increaſe it: affectionate condeſcenſion on the huſband's part, chearful ſubmiſſion on the wife's; mildneſs and tenderneſs, prudence and attention to their common intereſt, and that of their joint poſterity, on both parts. It is uſually, in a great meaſure at leaſt, from the want of theſe engaging qualities in one or the other, that falſehood ariſes. And if that doth not, ſome other evil will; too likely to produce effects equally grievous, and therefore to be conſidered as equally forbidden.

But now, from the mutual fidelity required of married perſons, I proceed, ſecondly, to the chaſtity and modeſty required of all perſons.

Suppoſing that only ſuch as live ſingle were to be guilty with each other; yet by means even of this licentiouſneſs, in proportion as it prevails, the regularity and good order of ſociety is overturned, the credit and peace of families deſtroyed, the proper diſpoſal of young people in marriage prevented, the due education of children and proviſion for them neglected, the keeneſt animoſities perpetually excited, and the moſt ſhocking murders frequently committed, of the parties themſelves, their rivals, their innocent babes: in ſhort, every enormity follows from hence, that lawleſs paſſion can introduce. For all ſins indeed, but eſpecially this, leads perſons on to more and greater: to all manner of falſehood to ſecure their ſucceſs, all manner of diſhoneſty to provide for the expenſiveneſs of theſe courſes, all manner of barbarity to hide the ſhame or lighten the inconveniencies of them: till thus they become abandoned to every crime, by indulging this one.

But let us conſider the fatal effects of it on the two ſexes, ſeparately. Women, that loſe their innocence, which ſeldom fails of being ſoon diſcovered, loſe their good name intirely along with it; are marked out and given up at once to almoſt irrecoverable infamy: and even mere ſuſpicion hath in ſome meaſure the ſame bad conſequences with certain proof. It is doubtleſs, extremely unjuſt to work up mere imprudencies into groſs tranſgreſſions: and even the greateſt tranſgreſſors ought to be treated with all poſſible compaſſion, when they appear truly penitent. But, unleſs they appear ſo, a wide diſtinction between them and others ought to be made. And

they

they who contribute, whether deſignedly or thoughtleſsly, to place good, bad, and doubtful characters all on a level, do moſt preposterouſly obſcure and debaſe their own virtue, if they have any; keep guilt in countenance, and defraud right conduct of the peculiar eſteem which belongs to it: thus injuring at once the cauſe of religion and morals, and the intereſts of ſociety. But beſides the general diſregard, of which vicious women will experience not a little, even in places and times of the moſt relaxed ways of thinking, they have a ſorer evil to expect; of being, ſooner or later, for the moſt part very ſoon, caſt off and abandoned, with contempt and ſcorn, by their ſeducers. Or even ſhould they have reparation made them by marriage; this doth not take away the ſin at all, and the diſgrace but very imperfectly: not to ſay, that it ſtill leaves them peculiarly expoſed to the reproaches and the jealouſy of their huſbands ever after.

And if men, that ſeduce women, are not looked on by the world with ſo much abhorrence, as women that are ſeduced, at leaſt they deſerve to be looked on with greater. For there cannot eaſily be more exquiſite wickedneſs, than, merely for the gratifying of a brutal appetite or idle fancy, to change all the proſpect, which a young perſon hath of being happy and reſpected through life, into guilt, and diſhonour, and diſtreſs, out of which too probably ſhe will never be diſentangled, under the falſe and treacherous pretence of tender regard. If we have any feeling of conſcience within us, we muſt feel this to be moſt unworthy behaviour. And if the Ruler of the world hath any attention to the moral character of his rational creatures, which is the nobleſt object of his attention, that can be conceived, he muſt ſhew it on ſuch occaſions: and therefore may be believed, when he ſaith He will.

But ſuppoſing men not to corrupt the innocent, but to ſin with ſuch alone as make a profeſſion of ſin; yet even this manner of breaking the law of God hath moſt dreadful conſequences. It hinders the increaſe of a nation in general. It leaves the few children that proceed from theſe mixtures, abandoned to miſery, uſeleſſneſs and wickedneſs. It turns aſide the minds of perſons from beneficial and laudable employments to mean ſenſual purſuits. It encourages and increaſes the moſt diſſolute and in every ſenſe abandoned ſet of wretches in the world, common proſtitutes, to their own miſerable and early deſtruction;

tion; and that of multitudes of unwary youths, who would elſe have eſcaped. It debaſes the heart, by the influence of ſuch vile and profligate company to vile and profligate ways of thinking and acting. It ſometimes produces quarrels, that are immediately fatal: ſometimes friendſhips, that are equally ſo, to every valuable purpoſe of life. It leads men to extravagance and profuſion, grieves all that wiſh well, diſtreſſes thoſe who are to ſupport them, and drives them to the moſt criminal methods of ſupporting themſelves. It tempts men to exceſſes and irregularities of every kind, waſtes their health and ſtrength, brings on them painful and opprobrious diſeaſes, too often communicated to thoſe, whom they afterwards marry; and to their miſerable poſterity, if they have any. By all theſe miſchiefs, which for the moſt part come upon them in the beginning of their days, the remainder of them is made either *ſhort* or *tedious*, perhaps both *. With great wiſdom therefore doth Solomon exhort: *Remove thy way from the ſtrange woman, and come not nigh the door of her houſe: leſt thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel: leſt ſtrangers be filled with thy wealth, and thou mourn at the laſt, when thy fleſh and thy body are conſumed, and ſay, How have I hated inſtruction, and my heart deſpiſed reproof; and I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers. For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities ſhall take the wicked, and he ſhall be holden with the cords of his ſins* †.

It is very true, the ſins of the fleſh do not always produce all the bitter fruits which I have mentioned. But then ſuch inſtances of them, as at firſt are imagined the ſafeſt, frequently prove extremely hurtful; or however intice perſons on to worſe, till they come at length to the moſt flagrant and pernicious. Very few, who tranſgreſs the ſcripture-bounds, ever ſtop at thoſe lengths, which themſelves, when they ſet out, thought the greateſt that were defenſible. Liberties taken by men before marriage, incline them to repeat the ſame liberties after marriage; and alſo to entertain the moſt injurious jealouſies of good women, grounded on the knowledge which they have formerly had of bad ones. Their paſt ſucceſſes embolden and incite them to new and more flagitious attempts: and by

* Wiſd. ii. 1. † Prov. v. 8,—13, 21, 22.

by appetites thus indulged, and habits contracted, they are carried on perpetually further and further, till they come to be guilty, and ſometimes merely for the ſake and the name of being guilty, of what they would once have trembled to hear propoſed.

But ſuppoſing they keep within the limits of what they at firſt imagined to be allowable: is imagination (and reaſon, when biaſſed by paſſions, is nothing better) the teſt of truth? Suppoſing their behaviour could be harmleſs otherwiſe, is not the example dangerous? Will or can the world around them take notice of all the pretended peculiarities that diſtinguiſh their caſe, and preſerve it from being a ſin, while other crimes, to which at firſt ſight it is very like, are confeſſedly great ones? or will not all, who have bad inclinations or unſettled principles, take ſhelter under their practice, and either deſpiſe their refinements, or eaſily invent ſimilar ones for their own uſe?

But further yet: if it be argued, that offences of this nature may by circumſtances be rendered excuſable, why not others alſo? why may not robbery, why may not murder be defended, by ſaying, that though undoubtedly in general they are very wrong, yet in ſuch or ſuch particular occurrences, there is on the whole very little hurt, or none at all, done by them, but perhaps good? And what would become of the human race, were ſuch pleas admitted? The ends of government can be attained by no other than by plain, determinate, comprehenſive laws, to be ſteadily obſerved: and no one's inclination, or fanciful theories, are to decide, when they bind, and when not: but deviations from them are criminal, if on no other account, yet becauſe they are deviations: though differently criminal indeed according to their different degrees. Thus, in the matter before us, what approaches nearer to marriage is, ordinarily ſpeaking, ſo far leſs blameable, than what is more diſtant from it: but nothing can be void of blame, and of great blame, that breaks the ordinances of God or man. For even the latter, if they oblige the conſcience in any caſe, muſt oblige it in this, where public and private welfare is ſo eſſentially concerned. And as to the former, though ſenſual irregularities may ſuit very well with ſome ſorts of ſuperſtition, yet their incon-

inconſiſtence with any thing that deſerves the name of religion, is confeſſed in effect by the perſons guilty of them. For if ſome few ſuch do hypocritically, in vain hope of concealment, keep on the appearance of it, yet who amongſt them can preſerve the reality of it? Offences of this kind, how plauſibly ſoever palliated, yet, being committed againſt known prohibitions, wear out of the mind all reverence to God's commandments, all expectation of his future favour, nay, the very deſire of ſpiritual happineſs hereafter. And though many, who indulge in licentiouſneſs, have notwithſtanding very good qualities; yet, would they review their hearts and lives, they would find that they have much the fewer for it; and that thoſe which remain are often made uſeleſs, often endangered, often perverted by it.

But the ſins already mentioned, are by no means the only ones to be avoided in conſequence of this commandment: whatever invites to them, whatever approaches towards them, whatever is contrary to decency and honour, whatever taints the purity of the mind, inflames the paſſions, and wears off the impreſſions of virtuous ſhame; all immodeſty of appearance or behaviour; all entertainments, books, pictures, converſations, tending to excite or excuſe the indulgence of irregular deſires, are in their proportion prohibited and criminal. And unleſs we prudently guard againſt the ſmaller offences of this kind, the more heinous will be too likely to force their way: as our Lord very ſtrongly warns us. *Ye have heard it was ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery: but I ſay unto you, that whoſoever looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her in his heart* *. And though vicious inclinations were never to go further than the heart; yet if, inſtead of merely intruding againſt our will, they are deſignedly encouraged to dwell there, they corrupt the very fountain of ſpiritual life; and none but *the pure in heart ſhall ſee God* †.

All perſons therefore ſhould be very careful to turn their minds from forbidden objects, to fix their attention ſo conſtantly and ſteadily on uſeful and commendable employments, as to have no leiſure for vices, and to govern themſelves by ſuch rules of temperance and prudence, that every ſenſual appetite

* Mat. v. 27, 28. † Mat. v. 8.

petite may be kept in ſubjection to the dictates of reaſon and the laws of religion; always remembering that Chriſtianity both delivers to us the ſtricteſt precepts of holineſs, and ſets before us the ſtrongeſt motives to it; our peculiar relation to a holy God and Saviour; our being *the temples of the Holy Ghoſt**, which *temple if any man defile, him will God deſtroy*†; our being *pilgrims and ſtrangers on earth* ‡, not intended to have our portion here, but to inherit a ſpiritual happineſs hereafter: and *every one that hath this hope, muſt purify himſelf even as God is pure* §. I ſhall conclude therefore with St Paul's exhortation: *Fornication, and all uncleanneſs, let it not be once named among you, as becometh ſaints; neither filthineſs, nor fooliſh talking, nor jeſting, which are not convenient: for this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean perſon, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Chriſt and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for becauſe of theſe things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of diſobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them: walk as children of light, and have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs* ‖.

* 1 Cor. vi. 19. † 1 Cor. iii. 17. ‡ 1 Pet. ii. 11.
§ 1 John iii. 3. ‖ Eph. v. 3,—11.

LECTURE XXVI.

The Eighth Commandment.

UNDER the eighth commandment is comprehended our duty to our neighbour, in reſpect of his worldly ſubſtance. And, to explain it diſtinctly, I ſhall endeavour to ſhow,

I. What it forbids: and,

II. What, by conſequence, it requires.

I. As to the former. The wickedneſs of mankind hath invented ways to commit ſuch an aſtoniſhing variety of ſins againſt this

this commandment, that it is impoſſible to reckon them up, and dreadful to think of them. But moſt, if not all of them, are ſo manifeſtly ſins, that the leaſt reflection is enough to make any one ſenſible, how much he is bound conſcientiouſly to avoid them. And he, who deſires to preſerve himſelf innocent, eaſily may.

The moſt open and ſhameleſs crime, of this ſort, is robbery; taking from another what is his, by force: which, adding violence againſt his perſon to invaſion of his property, and making every part of human life unſafe, is a complicated tranſgreſſion, of very deep guilt.

The next degree is ſecret theft: privately converting to our own uſe what is not our own. To do this in matters of great value, is confeſſedly pernicious wickedneſs. And though it were only in what may ſeem a trifle; yet every man's right to the ſmalleſt part of what belongs to him is the ſame, as to the largeſt: and he ought no more to be wronged of one, than of the other. Beſides, little inſtances of diſhoneſty cauſe great diſquiet: make the ſufferers diſtruſtful of all about them; ſometimes of thoſe who are the fartheſt from deſerving it: make them apprehenſive continually, that ſome heavier injury will follow. And indeed almoſt all offenders begin with ſlight offences. More heinous ones would ſhock them at firſt; but if they once allow themſelves in leſſer faults; they go on without reluctance, by degrees, to worſe and worſe, till at laſt they ſcruple nothing. Always therefore beware of ſmall ſins. And always remember, what I have already obſerved to you, that when any thing is committed to your care and truſt, to be diſhoneſt in that, is peculiarly baſe.

But, beſides what every body calls theft, there are many practices, which amount indirectly to much the ſame thing, however diſguiſed in the world under gentler names. Thus, in the way of trade and buſineſs: if the ſeller puts off any thing for better than it is, by falſe aſſertions, or deceitful arts: if he takes advantage of the buyer's ignorance, or particular neceſſities, or good opinion of him, to inſiſt on a larger price for it, than the current value; or if he gives leſs in quantity than he profeſſes, or is underſtood to give: the frequency of ſome of theſe things cannot alter the nature of any of them: no one can be ignorant that they are wrong, but ſuch as are wilfully or very careleſsly ignorant: and the declara-

tion of ſcripture againſt the laſt of them is extended, in the ſame place, to every one of the reſt. *Thou ſhalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a ſmall: thou ſhalt not have in thine houſe divers meaſures, a great and a ſmall. For all that do ſuch things, and all that do unrighteouſly, are an abomination unto the Lord thy God* *.

On the other hand: if the buyer takes advantage of his own wealth; and the poverty or preſent diſtreſs of the ſeller, to beat down the price of his merchandiſe beyond reaſon; or if he buys up the whole of a commodity, eſpecially if it be a neceſſary one, to make immoderate gain of it; or if he refuſes or neglects to pay for what he hath bought; or delays his payments beyond the time, within which, by agreement or the known courſe of traffic, they ought to be made: all ſuch behaviour is downright injuſtice and breach of God's law. For the rule is, *If thou ſelleſt ought unto thy neighbour, or buyeſt ought of thy neighbour's hand, ye ſhall not oppreſs one another* †.

Again, Borrowing on fraudulent ſecurities, or falſe repreſentations of our circumſtances, or without intention, or without proper care afterwards to repay; preferring the gratification of our covetouſneſs, our vanity, our voluptuouſneſs, our indolence, before the ſatisfying of our juſt debts: all this is palpable wickedneſs. And juſt as bad is the contrary wickedneſs, of demanding exorbitant intereſt for lending to ignorant or thoughtleſs perſons; or to extravagant ones, for carrying on their extravagance; or to neceſſitous ones, whoſe neceſſities it muſt continually increaſe, and make their ruin, after a while, more certain, more difficult to retrieve, and more hurtful to all with whom they are concerned. The ſcripture hath particularly forbidden it in the laſt caſe, and enjoined a very different ſort of behaviour. *If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then ſhalt thou relieve him: yea, though he be a ſtranger, or a ſojourner. Thou ſhalt not give him thy money upon uſury, nor lend him thy victuals for increaſe; but fear thy God, that thy brother may dwell with thee* ‡. And the Pſalmiſt hath expreſſed the two oppoſite characters, on theſe occaſions, very briefly and clearly. *The wicked borroweth, and*

* Deut. xxv. 13,—16. † Lev. xxv. 14. ‡ Lev. xxv. 35, &c.

and payeth not again: but the righteous ſheweth mercy, and giveth *.

Another crying iniquity is, when hired ſervants, labourers, or workmen of any ſort, are ill uſed in their wages: whether by giving them too little; or, which is often full as bad, deferring it too long: The word of God forbids this laſt in very ſtrong terms. *Thou ſhalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired, ſhall not abide with thee*, meaning, if demanded or wanted, *all night until the morning*†. *At his day ſhalt thou give him his hire; neither ſhall the ſun go down upon it; for* ‡ *he is poor, and ſetteth his heart upon it: leſt he cry againſt thee unto the Lord, and it be ſin unto thee* §. Nay, the ſon of Sirach carries it, with reaſon, (as I obſerved to you on the ſixth commandment) further ſtill. *The bread of the needy is their life: he that defraudeth the labourer of his hire, is a blood-ſhedder* ||.

But, beſides all theſe inſtances of unrighteouſneſs, there are many more that are frequent, in all kinds of contracts. Driving bargains, that we know are too hard; or inſiſting rigidly on the performance of them, after they appear to be ſo: making no abatements, when bad times, or unexpected loſſes, or other alterations of circumſtances, call for them: not inquiring into the grounds of complaints, when there is a likelihood of their being juſt: throwing unreaſonable burthens upon others, merely becauſe they dare not refuſe them: keeping them to the very words and letter of an agreement, contrary to the equitable intention of it; or, on the other hand, alledging ſome flaw and defect in form, to get looſe from an agreement, which ought to have been ſtrictly obſerved: all theſe things are grievous oppreſſions. And though ſome of them may not be in the leaſt contrary to law, yet they are utterly irreconcileable with good conſcience. Human laws cannot provide for all caſes; and ſometimes the vileſt iniquities may be committed under their authority, and by their means.

It is therefore a further lamentable breach of this commandment, when one perſon puts another to the charge and hazard of law unjuſtly or needleſsly; or, in ever ſo neceſſary a lawſuit,

* Pſal. xxxvii. 21. † Lev. xix. 13. ‡ *For*—or, *when*.
§ Deut. xxiv. 15. || Ecclus. xxxiv. 21, 22.

ſuit, occaſions unneceſſary expences, and contrives unfair delays: in ſhort, when any thing is done by either party; by the counſel, that plead or adviſe in the cauſe, or by the Judge, who determines it, contrary to real juſtice and equity.

Indeed, when perſons, by any means whatever, withhold from another his right; either keeping him ignorant of it, or forcing him to unreaſonable coſt or trouble to obtain it; this, in its proportion, is the ſame kind of injury with ſtealing from him. To ſee the rich and great, in theſe or any ways, bear hard upon the poor, is very dreadful: and truly it is little, if at all, leſs ſo, when the lower ſort of people are unmerciful, as they are but too often, one to another. For, as Solomon obſerves, *A poor man that oppreſſeth the poor, is like a ſweeping rain, which leaveth no food* *. But ſuppoſe it be a perſon ever ſo wealthy, that is wronged; ſtill his wealth is his own, and no one can have more right to take the leaſt part of it from him, without his conſent, than to rob the meaneſt wretch in the world. Suppoſe it be a body or number of men; ſuppoſe it to be the government, the public, that is cheated; be it of more or leſs, be it of ſo little as not to be ſenſibly miſſed; let the guilt be divided amongſt ever ſo many; let the practice be ever ſo common; ſtill it is the ſame crime, however it may vary in degrees: and the rule is without exception, that *no man go beyond, or defraud his brother in any matter* †.

It ſurely ſcarce needs to be added, that whatever things it is unlawful to do, it is alſo unlawful to adviſe, encourage, help, or protect others in doing: that buying, receiving, or concealing ſtolen goods, knowing them to be ſuch, is becoming a partner in the ſtealth: and that being any way a patron, aſſiſtant, or tool of injuſtice, is no leſs evidently wrong, than being the immediate and principal agent in it.

And as the wrongneſs of all theſe things is very plain, ſo is the folly of them. Common robbers and thieves are the moſt miſerable ſet of wretches upon earth: in perpetual danger, perpetual frights and alarms; obliged to ſupport their ſpirits by continual exceſſes, which, after the gay madneſs of a few hours, depreſs them to the moſt painful lowneſs; confined to the moſt hateful and helliſh ſociety; very ſoon, generally ſpeaking, betrayed by their deareſt companions, or hunted out by vigilant

* Prov. xxviii. 3. † 1 Theſſ. iv. 6.

vigilant officers; then ſhut up in horror, condemned to open ſhame, if not to an untimely death; and the more ſurely undone for ever in the next life, the more inſenſible they are of their ſufferings and their ſins in this.

Nor do they, of whoſe guilt the law can take little or no cognizance, eſcape a heavy and bitter ſelf-condemnation from time to time; nor uſually the bad opinion of the world; which laſt alone will frequently do them more harm, than any unfair practices will do them good. But eſpecially this holds in the middle and lower, which is vaſtly the larger part of mankind. Their livelihood depends chiefly on their character; and their character depends on their honeſty. This will make amends for the want of many other defects. Deceitful craft may ſeem perhaps a ſhorter method of gain, than uprightneſs and diligence. But they who get wickedly, ſpend, for the moſt part, fooliſhly, perhaps wickedly too: and ſo all that ſtays by them is their guilt. Or let them be ever ſo cunning, and appear for a while to thrive ever ſo faſt; yet remember the ſayings of the wiſe king: *An inheritance may be gotten haſtily at the beginning; but the end thereof ſhall not be bleſſed**. *Treaſures of wickedneſs profit nothing: but righteouſneſs delivereth from death* †. *Wealth, gotten by vanity, ſhall be diminiſhed: but he that gathereth by labour, ſhall increaſe* ‡. Or, ſhould the proſperity of perſons, who raiſe themſelves by ill means, laſt as long as their lives; yet their lives may be cut ſhort. For what the Prophet threatens, often comes to paſs, and is always to be feared: *He that getteth riches, and not by right, ſhall leave them in the midſt of his days, and at his end ſhall be a fool* §. But ſhould his days on earth be extended to the utmoſt; yet *the ſinner, an hundred years old ſhall be accurſed* ‖. For *the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God* ¶: but *the Lord is the avenger of all ſuch* *.

Let every one therefore conſider ſeriouſly, in the firſt place, what this commandment forbids; and abſtain from it. Tho' he fare more hardly; though he lay up leſs; though he be deſpiſed for his conſcientiouſneſs, provided it be a reaſonable one; ſurely it is well worth while to bear theſe things, rather than injure our fellow-creatures, and offend our Maker.

But

* Prov. xx. 21. † Prov. x. 2. ‡ Prov. xiii. 11. § Jer. xvii. 11
‖ Iſa. lxv. 20. ¶ 1 Cor. vi. 9. * 1 Theſſ. iv. 6.

But let us now proceed to consider,

II. What the commandment before us, by consequence, requires. And,

1. It requires restitution of whatever we have, at any time, unjustly taken or detained. For, that being in right not our own, but another's; keeping it is continuing and carrying on the injustice. Therefore the Prophet Ezekiel makes it an express condition of forgiveness: *If the wicked restore the pledge, and give again that he had robbed; then he shall surely live, he shall not die* *. Nor was it till Zaccheus had engaged to restore amply what he had extorted from any one, that our Saviour declared, *This day is salvation come to this house* †. So that to think of raising wealth by fraud, and then growing honest, is the silliest scheme in the world: for till we have returned, or offered to return, as far as we can, all that we have gotten by fraud, we are not honest. Nay, suppose we have spent and squandered it, still we remain debtors for it. Nay, suppose we got nothing, by any wicked contrivances, in which we have been concerned; yet if we have caused another's loss, any loss for which money is a proper compensation; what we ought never to have done, we ought to undo as soon and as completely as we are able, however we straiten ourselves by it; otherwise we come short of making the amends, which may justly be expected from us: and, while so important a part of repentance is wanting, to demonstrate the sincerity of the rest, we cannot hope to be accepted with God.

2. This commandment also requires industry: without which, the generality of persons cannot maintain themselves honestly. Therefore St Paul directs: *Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him* (and certainly, by consequence, every one else that needs) *labour, working with his hands the thing which is good* ‡. And each of them is to labour, not only for himself, but his family also, if he hath one: both for their present, and, if possible, their future maintenance, in case of sickness, accidents, or old age. For as they who belong to him, have, both by nature and by law, a claim to support from him, if they need it, and he can give it; neglecting to make due provision for them is wronging them; and throwing either them or himself upon others, when he may avoid it, or however

* Ezek. xxxiii. 15. † Luke xix. 8, 9. ‡ Eph. iv. 28.

however might have avoided it by proper diligence, is wronging others. For which reaſon the ſame apoſtle commanded likewiſe, *that if any one would not work, neither ſhould he eat**.

In order to be juſt therefore, be induſtrious: and doubt not but you will find it, after a while at leaſt, by much the moſt comfortable, as well as Chriſtian, way of getting a livelihood. It is a way, that no one ought to think beneath him. For *better is he that laboureth, and aboundeth in all things, than he that boaſteth himſelf, and wanteth bread*†. It is the beſt preſervative that can be, from bad company and bad courſes. It procures the good will and good word of mankind. It exempts perſons from the contempt and reproach of which thoſe have bitter experience, who make a dependent ſtate their choice. *Begging is ſweet in the mouth of the ſhameleſs: but in his belly there ſhall burn a fire*‡. Very different from this is the caſe of the induſtrious. Their minds are at eaſe; their bodies are uſually healthy: their time is employed as they know it ſhould: what they get, they enjoy with a good conſcience, and it wears well. Nor do only the fruits of their labour delight them: but even labour itſelf becomes pleaſant to them.

And though perſons of higher condition are not bound to *work with their hands*, yet they alſo muſt be diligent in other ways: in the buſineſs of their offices and profeſſions; or if they have none, yet in the care of their families and affairs. Elſe the former will be ill-governed, wicked and miſerable: and the latter ſoon run into ſuch diſorder, as will almoſt force them, either to be unjuſt to their creditors, and thoſe for whom Nature binds them to provide; or to be guilty of mean and diſhonourable actions of more kinds than one, to avoid theſe and other diſagreeable conſequences of their ſupineneſs. Beſides, as the upper part of the world are peculiarly deſtined by Providence to be in one way or another extenſively uſeful in ſociety: ſuch of them as are not, defraud it of the ſervice they owe it, and therefore break this commandment. But,

3. To obſerve it well, frugality muſt be joined with induſtry: elſe it will be all labour in vain. For unwiſe expenſiveneſs will diſſipate whatever the utmoſt diligence can acquire. But if idleneſs be added to extravagance, that brings on quick ruin. And if intemperance and debauchery go along with them,

* 2 Theſſ. iii. 10. † Eccluſ. x. 27. ‡ Eccluſ. xl. 30.

them, the caſe is then come to its extremity. Every one therefore, who deſires to approve himſelf honeſt, ſhould be careful to live within the bounds of his income, ſo as to have ſomething in readineſs againſt the time of inability and unforeſeen events. But they who have, or deſign to have families, ſhould endeavour to live a good deal within thoſe bounds. And whoever ſpends upon himſelf, or throws away upon any other perſon or thing, more than he can prudently afford, (whatever falſe names of praiſe, as elegance, generoſity, good-nature, may be given to this indiſcretion) will be led, before he is aware, to diſtreſs himſelf, perhaps many more; and be too probably driven at laſt to repair, as well as he can, by wickedneſs, the breaches, which he hath made by *folly*.

4. This commandment requires in the laſt place, that we neither deny ourſelves, or thoſe who belong to us, what is fit for our and their ſtation, which is one kind of robbery; nor c[illegible] to relieve the poor according to our ability, which is another kind. For whatever we enjoy of worldly plenty is given us in truſt, that we ſhould take our own ſhare with moderation, and diſtribute out of the remainder with liberality. And as they who have but little, will, moſt or all of them, at one time or another, find thoſe who have leſs; very few, if any, are exempted from giving ſome alms. And whoever either penuriouſly or thoughtleſsly neglects his proper ſhare of this duty, is unjuſt to his Maker and his fellow-creatures too. For the *good*, which God hath placed in our hands for the poor, is undoubtedly, as the ſcripture declares it, *their due*. He hath given them no right to ſeize it: but he hath bound us not to *with-hold* * it from them.

And now, having finiſhed the two heads propoſed, I ſhall only add, that by obſerving theſe directions from a principle of Chriſtian faith; and teaching all under our care to obſerve them from the ſame; the poor in this world may be *rich towards God* †: and the rich may *treaſure up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come*, which will enable them to *lay hold on eternal life* ‡.

* Prov. iii. 27. † Luke xii. 21. ‡ 1 Tim. vi. 19.

LEC-

LECTURE XXVII.

The Ninth Commandment.

THE Ninth Commandment is connected with every one of the four, which precede it. For neither the duties of ſuperiors and inferiors, nor thoſe amongſt equals, could be tolerably practiſed; neither the lives of men, nor their happineſs in the neareſt relation of life, nor their poſſeſſions and properties could ever be ſecure; if they were left expoſed to thoſe injuries of a licentious tongue, which are here prohibited. This commandment therefore was intended, partly to ſtrengthen the foregoing ones; and partly alſo, to make proviſion for every perſon's juſt character on its own account, as well as for the ſake of conſequences. For, independently on theſe, we have by nature (and with reaſon) a great concern about our reputations. And therefore the precept, *Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs againſt thy neighbour*, is, in all views, of much importance.

The crime, at which theſe words principally and moſt expreſsly point, is, giving falſe evidence in any cauſe or trial. And as, in ſuch caſes, evidence hath always been given upon oath; this commandment ſo far is the ſame with the third: only there, perjury is forbidden, as impiety againſt God; here, as injurious to men. Now we are guilty of this ſin, if, in bearing witneſs, we affirm that we know or believe any thing, which we do not; or deny that we know or believe any thing, which we do; or either affirm or deny more poſitively, than we have good grounds. Nay, if we only ſtifle, by our ſilence, any fact, which is material, though we are not examined particularly about it; ſtill when we have ſworn in general to ſpeak the whole truth, we bear falſe witneſs, if we deſignedly avoid it; eſpecially after being aſked, if we are able to ſay any thing beſides, relative to the point in queſtion. For hiding a truth may as totally miſlead thoſe who are to judge, as telling an untruth. Indeed, if by any means whatever we diſguiſe the real ſtate of the caſe, inſtead of relating it in the faireſt and plaineſt manner that we can: we evidently tranſgreſs the in-

tent of this commandment. And by doing it, the good name, the property, the livelihood, the life of an innocent perſon may be taken away; the advantages of ſociety defeated, nay, perverted into miſchiefs, and the very bonds of it diſſolved. Therefore the rule of the Moſaic law is: *If a falſe witneſs riſe up againſt any man, and teſtify againſt his brother that which is wrong; then ſhall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother, and thine eye ſhall not pity* *. With us indeed, the puniſhment extends not ſo far. But however mild ſuch perſons may find the penalties of human laws to be, or how artfully ſoever they may evade them; God hath declared: *A falſe witneſs ſhall not be unpuniſhed: and he that ſpeaketh lies ſhall not eſcape* †.

The commandment ſaith only, that we ſhall not bear falſe witneſs *againſt* our neighbour: but in effect it binds us equally not to bear falſe witneſs for him. For in all trials of property, bearing witneſs for one party is bearing witneſs againſt the other. And in all trials for crimes, falſe evidence, to the advantage of the perſon accuſed, is to the diſadvantage and ruin of right and truth, of public ſafety and peace; by concealing and encouraging what ought to be detected and puniſhed.

It being thus criminal to bear falſe witneſs; it muſt be criminal alſo to draw perſons into the commiſſion of ſo great a ſin, by gifts, or promiſes, or threatenings, or any other method. And, in its degree, it muſt be criminal to bring a falſe accuſation, or falſe action againſt any one; or to make any ſort of demand, for which there is no reaſonable ground.

Nay further, however favourably perſons are apt to think of the defendant's ſide; yet to defend ourſelves againſt juſtice, or even to delay it by unfair methods, is very wicked. For it ought to take place; and the ſooner the better. Still, both the profeſſors of the law, and others, may unqueſtionably ſay and do, for a doubtful or a bad cauſe, whatever can be ſaid with truth, or done with equity; for otherwiſe it might be thought ſtill worſe than it is; and treated worſe than it deſerves. But if they do, in any cauſe, what in reaſon ought not to be done; if they uſe or ſuggeſt indirect methods of defeating the intent of the law; if, by falſe colours and gloſſes, by terrifying

* Deut. xix. 16,—21. † Prov. xix. 5.

terrifying or confounding witneſſes, by calumniating or ridiculing the adverſe party, they endeavour to make juſtice itſelf an inſtrument for patronizing injuſtice; this is *turning judgment into gall*, as the ſcripture expreſſes it, *and the fruit of righteouſneſs into hemlock* *.

But in a ſtill higher degree is it ſo, if judges or jurymen are influenced, in giving their ſentence or verdict, by intereſt, relation, friendſhip, hatred, compaſſion, party; by any thing, but the nature of the caſe, as it fairly appears to them. For deſignedly making a falſe determination, is compleating all the miſchief, which bearing falſe witneſs only attempts. And, in a word, whoever any way promotes what is wrong, or obſtructs what is right, partakes in the ſame ſin: be it either of the parties, their evidences or agents: be it the higheſt magiſtrate, or the loweſt officer.

But perſons may break this commandment, not only in judicial proceedings; but, often full as grievouſly, in common diſcourſe: by raiſing, ſpreading, or countenancing falſe reports againſt others; or ſuch, as they have no ſufficient cauſe to think true; which is the caſe, in part at leaſt, of moſt reports: by miſrepreſenting their circumſtances in the world to their prejudice; or ſpeaking, without foundation, to the diſadvantage of their perſons, underſtandings, accompliſhments, temper, or conduct; whether charging them with faults and imperfections, which do not belong to them; or taking from them good qualities and recommendations, which do; or aggravating the former, or diminiſhing the latter: determining their characters from a ſingle bad action or two; fixing ill names on things which are really virtuous or innocent in them; imputing their laudable behaviour to blameable or worthleſs motives: making no allowance for the depravity or weakneſs of human nature, ſtrength of temptation, want of inſtruction, wicked inſinuations, vicious examples. And in all theſe ways, perſons may be injured, either by open public aſſertions; or more dangerouſly perhaps, by ſecret whiſpers, which they have no opportunity of contradicting. The ſcandal may be accompanied with ſtrong expreſſions of hoping it is not true, or being very ſorry for it; and warm declarations of great good will to the party, whom it concerns; all which may ſerve only to give it

* Amos vi. 12.

it a more unſuſpected credit. Nay, it may be conveyed very effectually in dark hints, expreſſive geſtures, or even affected ſilence. And theſe, as they may be equally miſchievous, are not leſs wicked, for being more cowardly and more artful methods of defamation.

Further yet: Speaking or intimating things to any perſon's diſadvantage, though they be true, is ſeldom innocent. For it uſually proceeds from bad principles: Revenge, envy, malice, pride, cenſoriouſneſs; unfair zeal for ſome private or party intereſt; or, at beſt, from deſire of appearing to know more than others, or mere impertinent fondneſs of talking. Now theſe are wretched motives for publiſhing what will be hurtful to one of our brethren. Sometimes indeed bad characters and bad actions ought to be known: but much oftner not, or not to all the world, or not by our means. And we have need to be very careful from what inducements we act in ſuch a caſe. Sometimes again things are known already, or ſoon will be known, let us be ever ſo ſilent about them: and then to be ſure, we are more at liberty. But even then, to take pleaſure in relating the faults of others is by no means right. And to reveal them, when they can be hid, unleſs a very conſiderable reaſon require it, is extremely wrong.

Indeed we ſhould be cautious, not only what harm, but what good we ſay of others. For ſpeaking too highly of their characters or circumſtances, or praiſing them in any reſpect beyond truth, is *bearing falſe witneſs* about them, which may ſometimes turn againſt them: and may often miſlead thoſe, to whom we exalt them thus; and produce grievouſly bad conſequences of many kinds. But the other is much the more common, and uſually the more hurtful extreme.

We all think it an injury, in the tendereſt part, when bad impreſſions are made on others concerning us; and therefore ſhould conſcientiouſly avoid doing the ſame injury to others. Making them deſignedly, without cauſe, is inexcuſable wickedneſs. And even where we intend no harm, we may do a great deal. Whatever hurts, in any reſpect, the reputation of perſons, always gives them great pain, and often doth them great prejudice, even in their moſt important concerns. For indeed almoſt every thing in this world depends on character. And

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when once that hath ſuffered an imputation; for the moſt part, neither the perſons calumniated, be they ever ſo innocent, can recover it completely by their own endeavours, nor the perſons who have wronged them, be they ever ſo deſirous, reſtore it fully to its former ſtate: though certainly they, who rob others of their good name, or even without deſign aſperſe it, are full as much bound to make reſtitution for that, as for any other damage, which they cauſe. But were they not to hurt at all the perſon againſt whom they ſpeak, ſtill they hurt themſelves, and leſſen their power of doing good in the world; they often hurt their innocent families by the provocations which they give; they grieve their friends; they ſet a miſchievous example in ſociety; and, if they profeſs any religion, bring a dreadful reproach upon it, by a temper and behaviour ſo juſtly hateful to mankind.

It will eaſily be underſtood, that, next to the raiſers and ſpreaders of ill reports, they who encourage perſons of that kind, by hearkening to them with pleaſure, and by readineſs of belief in what they ſay, contradict the intention of this commandment. Indeed we ought, far from countenancing ſcandal and detraction, to expreſs, in all proper ways, our diſlike of it: ſhew the uncertainty, the improbability, the falſehood, if we can, of injurious rumours; oppoſe the divulging even of truths that are uncharitable; and ſet a pattern of giving every one his juſt praiſe.

It muſt now be obſerved further, that though undoubtedly thoſe falſehoods are the worſt, which hurt others the moſt directly, yet falſehoods in general are hurtful and wrong. And therefore lying; all uſe either of words or actions of known ſettled import, with purpoſe to deceive; is unlawful. And thoſe offences of this kind, which may ſeem the moſt harmleſs, have yet commonly great evil in them. Lying deſtroys the very end of ſpeech, and leads us into perpetual miſtakes, by the very means which God intended ſhould lead us into truth. It puts an end to all the pleaſure, all the benefit, all the ſafety of converſation. Nobody can know, on what or whom to depend. For if one perſon may lie, why not another? and at this rate, no juſtice can be done, no wickedneſs be prevented or puniſhed, no buſineſs go forward. All theſe miſchiefs will equally follow, whether untruths be told in a groſs

groſs barefaced manner, or diſguiſed under equivocations, quibbles, and evaſions. The ſin therefore is as great in one caſe as the other. And it is ſo great in both, that no ſufficient excuſes can ever be made for it in either, though ſeveral are often pleaded.

Many perſons imagine, that, when they have committed a fault, it is very pardonable to conceal it under a lie. But ſome faults ought not to be concealed at all; and none by this method; which is committing two, inſtead of one; and the ſecond not uncommonly worſe than the firſt. And ingenuous confeſſion will be likely, in moſt caſes, to procure an eaſy pardon: but a lie is a monſtrous aggravation of an offence; and perſiſting in a lie can very hardly be forgiven. But, above all, if any perſons, to hide what they have done amiſs themſelves, are ſo vile as to throw the blame or the ſuſpicion of it upon another; this is the height of wickedneſs. And therefore particularly all children and ſervants, who are chiefly tempted to excuſe themſelves by telling falſehoods, ought to undergo any thing, rather than be guilty of ſuch a ſin. And, on the other hand, all parents, maſters, and miſtreſſes, ought to beware of puniſhing them too ſeverely for their other offences; leſt they drive them into a habit of this terrible one.

Some again plead for making free with truth, that they do it only in jeſt. But theſe jeſts of theirs often occaſion great uneaſineſs and diſquiet; and ſometimes other very ſerious bad conſequences. The ſcripture therefore hath paſſed a ſevere cenſure upon them. *As a madman, who caſteth fire-brands, arrows, and death; ſo is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and ſaith, Am I not in ſport**? To give another perſon vexation, or make him appear contemptible, though in a ſlight inſtance, is by no means innocent ſport. And beſides, to ſpeak falſehood on any occaſion is a dangerous introduction to ſpeaking it on more, if not all, occaſions. For if ſo trifling a motive as a jeſt will prevail on us to violate truth, how can we be expected to withſtand more weighty temptations?

However, it may perhaps at leaſt be thought, that lying, to prevent miſchief and do good, muſt be permitted. But the ſcripture expreſsly forbids us to *do evil, that good may come*†. And they, who allow themſelves in it, will uſually be diſcovered

* Prov. xxvi. 19. † Rom. iii. 8.

vered and loſe their end: or, if not, will never know where to ſtop. They will be enticed by degrees to think every thing good, that ſerves their turn, let others think it ever ſo bad: thoſe others again will think themſelves authorized by ſuch examples to take the ſame liberties: and thus all truſt and probity will be loſt amongſt men: a much greater evil, than any good, which falſehood may do now and then, will ever compenſate.

And if telling lies, even from theſe plauſible inducements, be ſo bad; what muſt it be, when they proceed from leſs excuſable ones, as deſire of promoting our own intereſt, or that of our party: and how completely deteſtable, when we are prompted to them by malice, or undue reſentment, or any other totally wicked principle!

Nor is the practice leſs imprudent, than it is unlawful. Some indeed lie to raiſe their characters, as others do to gain their points. But both act very abſurdly. For they miſs of their purpoſe entirely, as ſoon as they are found out: and all liars are found out; immediately, for the moſt part; but in a while without fail. And after that, every body deſpiſes and hates them: even when they ſpeak truth, nobody knows how to credit them: and ſo, by aiming wickedly at ſome little advantage for the preſent, they put themſelves fooliſhly under the greateſt diſadvantage in the world ever after. *The lip of truth ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment* *. Beware then of the leaſt beginning of a practice that will be ſure to end ill. For if you venture upon falſehood at all, it will grow upon you, and entangle you; and bring you to ſhame, to puniſhment, to ruin. And, beſides what you will ſuffer by it here, your portion, unleſs you repent very deeply, and amend very thoroughly, will be with the father of lies hereafter. For *into* the heavenly *Jeruſalem ſhall in no wiſe enter whoſoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie* †. *Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly, are his delight* ‡.

There is yet another ſort of falſehood, often full as bad as affirming what we do not think: I mean, promiſing what we do not intend; or what we neglect afterwards to perform, ſo ſoon, or ſo fully, as we ought. Whoever hath promiſed, hath

* Prov. xii. 19, 22. † Rev. xxi. 27. ‡ Prov xii. 22.

made himſelf a debtor: and, unleſs he be punctual in his payment, commits an injuſtice; which in many caſes may be of very pernicious conſequence.

Now, in order to ſecure this great point of ſpeaking truth: beſides conſidering carefully and frequently the before-mentioned evils of departing from it, we ſhould be attentive alſo to moderate the quantity of our diſcourſe, leſt we fall into falſehood unawares. For *in the multitude of words there wanteth not ſin: but he that refraineth his lips is wiſe* *. Perſons, who ſuffer themſelves to run on heedleſsly in talk, juſt as their preſent humour diſpoſes them, or the preſent company will be beſt pleaſed; or who will ſay almoſt any thing, rather than ſay nothing; muſt be perpetually tranſgreſſing ſome of the duties comprehended under this commandment; which yet it is of the utmoſt importance not to tranſgreſs. For, with reſpect to the concerns of this world, *He that loveth life, and would ſee good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they ſpeak no guile* †. And, as to our eternal ſtate in the next, *If any man ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain* ‡.

* Prov. x. 19. † Pſal. xxxiv. 12, 13. ‡ James i. 26.

LECTURE XXVIII.

The Tenth Commandment.

WE are now come to the tenth and laſt commandment; which is by the Church of Rome abſurdly divided into two, to keep up the number, after joining the firſt and ſecond into one, contrary to ancient authority, Jewiſh and Chriſtian. How the miſtake was originally made, is hard to ſay: but undoubtedly they retain and defend it the more earneſtly, in order to paſs over the ſecond commandment, as only part of the firſt, without any diſtinct meaning of its own. And accordingly

accordingly many of their devotional books omit it entirely. But that theſe two ought not to be thus joined and confounded, I have ſhown you already. And that this now before us, ought not to be divided, it is extremely evident: for it is one ſingle prohibition of all unjuſt deſires. And if reckoning up the ſeveral prohibited objects of deſire makes it more than one commandment; for the ſame reaſon it will be more than two. For there are ſix things forbidden in it particularly, beſides all the reſt, that are forbidden in general. And, moreover, if this be two commandments, which is the firſt of them? For in Exodus it begins, *Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's houſe:* but in Deuteronomy, *Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.* And accordingly ſome of their books of devotion make the former, ſome the latter of theſe, the ninth *. Surely the order of the words would never have been changed thus in ſcripture, had there been two commandments in them †: but being one, it is no way material, which part is named firſt. I ſay no more therefore on ſo clear a point: but proceed to explain this precept, of *not coveting what is our neighbour's.*

The good things of this life being the gifts of God, for which all are to be thankful to him; deſiring, with due moderation and ſubmiſſion, a comfortable ſhare of them, is very natural and right. Wiſhing, that our ſhare were better, is, in the caſe of many perſons, ſo far from a ſin, that endeavouring diligently to make it better is part of their duty. Wiſhing it were equal to that of ſuch another, is not wiſhing ill to

* Their Manual of Prayers in Engliſh, 1725, puts, *Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's wife*, for the ninth. But in the Office of the Virgin, both Latin and Engliſh, called the Primer, 1717, *Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's houſe*, is the ninth.

† Indeed the Vatican Copy of the Septuagint in Exodus places, *Thou ſhalt not commit adultery*, before *Thou ſhalt do no murder*. And ſo do Mark x. 19. Luke xviii. 20. Rom. xiii. 9. and Philo, and part of the fathers. But the Hebrew and Samaritan, and all tranſlations, excepting the Septuagint, and even that in Deuteronomy, and I believe moſt copies of it in Exodus, and Matth. xix. 18. and Joſephus, and another part of the fathers, keep the now common order. And the Evangeliſts did not intend to obſerve the original order: for they put, *Honour thy father*, &c. laſt. And St Paul doth not ſay, that he intended to obſerve it. This therefore is not a parallel caſe to that of the tenth commandment.

him, but only well to ourſelves. And ſeeking to obtain what belongs to another may, in proper circumſtances, be perfectly innocent. We may really have occaſion for it; he may be well able to beſtow it; or he may have occaſion for ſomething of ours in return. And on theſe mutual wants of men all commerce and trade is founded: which God, without queſtion, deſigned ſhould be carried on; becauſe he hath made all countries abound in ſome things, and left them deficient in others.

Not every ſort of deſires therefore, but unfit and immoderate deſires only, are forbidden by the words, *Thou ſhalt not covet.* And theſe are ſuch as follow: Firſt, If our neighbour cannot lawfully part with his property, nor we lawfully receive it: and yet we want to have it. One inſtance of this kind is expreſſed, *Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.* Another is, if we want a perſon who poſſeſſes any thing in truſt, or under certain limitations, to give or ſell it in breach of that truſt or thoſe limitations. Or if he can part with it, but is not willing; and we entertain thoughts of acquiring it by force or fraud; or of being revenged on him for his refuſal; this alſo is highly blameable: for why ſhould not he be left quietly free maſter of his own? Indeed, barely preſſing and importuning perſons, contrary to their intereſt, or even their inclinations only, is in ſome degree wrong: for it is one way of extorting things from them; or however, of giving them trouble, where we have no right to give it.

But though we keep our deſires ever ſo much to ourſelves, they may notwithſtanding be very ſinful. And ſuch they are particularly, if they induce us to envy others: that is, to be uneaſy at their imagined ſuperior happineſs, to wiſh them ill, or take pleaſure in any harm which befalls them. For this turn of mind will prompt us to do them ill, if we can: as indeed a great part of the miſchief that is done in the world, and ſome of the worſt of it, ariſes from hence. *Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous: but who is able to ſtand againſt envy**? Accordingly, we find it joined in the New Teſtament with *ſtrife, railing, variance, ſedition, murder, confuſion, and every evil work* †. But were it to produce no miſchief to our neighbour,

* Prov. xxvii. 4. † Rom. i. 29. xiii. 13. 1 Cor. iii. 3. 2 Cor. xii. 20. Gal. v. 20, 21. 1 Tim. vi. 4. Jamiii. 14, 16.

bour, yet it is the directly oppoſite diſpoſition to that love of him, which is the ſecond great precept of Chriſt's religion. Nay, indeed it deſerves, in ſome reſpects, to be reckoned the worſt of ill-natured ſins. The revengeful man pleads for himſelf ſome injury attempted againſt him: but the envious perſon bears unprovoked malice to thoſe, who have done him neither wrong nor harm, ſolely becauſe he fancies them to be, in this or that inſtance, very happy. And why ſhould they not, if they can; as he certainly would, if he could? For the proſperity of bad people, it muſt be confeſſed, we have reaſon to be ſo far ſorry, as they are likely to do hurt by it. But to deſire their fall, rather than their amendment; to deſire what may be grievous to any perſons, not from good will to mankind, but from ill will to them; to wiſh any misfortune even to our competitors and rivals, merely becauſe they are ſuch; or becauſe they have ſucceeded, and enjoyed what we aimed at; is extremely uncharitable and inhuman. It is a temper that will give us perpetual diſquiet in this world, (for there will always be ſomebody to envy) and bring a heavy ſentence upon us in the next, unleſs we repent of it, and ſubdue it firſt.

But though our ſelfiſh deſires were to raiſe in us no malignity againſt our fellow-creatures; yet if they tempt us to murmur againſt our Creator; and either to ſpeak or think ill of that diſtribution of things, which his providence hath made; this is great impiety, and rebellion of the heart againſt God: who hath an abſolute right to diſpoſe of the works of his hands as he pleaſes; and uſes it always both with juſtice and with goodneſs to us. Were we innocent, we could none of us demand more advantages of any ſort, than he thought fit to give us: but as we are guilty wretches; far from having a claim to this or that degree of happineſs, we are every one liable to ſevere puniſhment. And therefore, with the many comforts and bleſſings which we have now, and the eternal felicity which, through the mercy of our heavenly Father, the merits of our bleſſed Redeemer, and the grace of the Holy Spirit, we may, if we will, have hereafter; ſurely we have no ground to complain of our condition. For what if things be unequally divided here? We may be certain the Diſpoſer of them hath wiſe reaſons for it, whether we can ſee them or not: and we may be as certain, that, unleſs it be our own fault, we ſhall

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be no loſers by it: for *all things work together for good to them that love God* *. Therefore, how little ſoever we enjoy, we have cauſe to be thankful for it: and how much ſoever we ſuffer, we have cauſe to be reſigned; nay, thankful too, even for that; as we may be happier in this world for many of our ſufferings; and ſhall, if we bear them as we ought, be improved in goodneſs by them all, and made happier to eternity.

But further yet: though we may not be conſcious of what we ſhall ſtudy to hide from ourſelves, that our deſires carry us, either to behave or wiſh ill to our neighbours, or to repine againſt God: ſtill, if they diſturb and agitate our minds; if we are eager and vehement about the objects of them; we are not arrived at the ſtate, in which we ſhould be found.

Some feeling of this inward tumult, eſpecially on trying occaſions, may be unavoidable by fallen man; and more of it natural to one perſon than another: but after all, it is voluntary indulgence, that gives our appetites, and paſſions, and fancies, the far greateſt ſhare of their dominion. We inflame them, when elſe they would be moderate: we affect things, for which we have really no liking, merely becauſe they are faſhionable: we create imaginary wants to ourſelves; and then grow as earneſt for what we might do perfectly well without, as if the whole of our felicity conſiſted in it. This is a very immoral ſtate of mind; and hurries perſons, almoſt irreſiſtably, into as immoral a courſe of life. In proportion as worldly inclinations of any kind engage the heart, they exclude from it ſocial affection, compaſſion, generoſity, integrity; and yet more effectually love to God, and attention to the concerns of our future ſtate. Nor do they almoſt ever fail to make us at preſent miſerable, as well as wicked. They prey upon our ſpirits, torment us with perpetual ſelf-diſlike, waſte our health, ſink our character, drive us into a thouſand fooliſh actions to gratify them; and, when all is done, can never be gratified, ſo as to give us any laſting ſatisfaction. Firſt, we ſhall be full of anxieties and fears: when we have got over theſe and obtained our wiſh, we ſhall quickly find it comes very ſhort of our expectation: then we ſhall be cloyed, and tired,

* Rom. viii. 28.

red, and wretchedly languid, till ſome new craving ſets us on work to as little purpoſe as the former did; or till we are wiſe enough to ſee, that ſuch purſuits are not the way to happineſs.

But ſuppoſing perſons are not violent in purſuing the imagined good things of this world; yet if they be dejected and grieved, that no more of them have fallen to their lot; if they mourn over the inferiority of their condition, and live in a perpetual feeling of affliction (be it ever ſo calm) on that account; or indeed on account of any croſs, or diſadvantage whatever, belonging to the preſent life: this alſo is a degree, tho' the loweſt and leaſt, yet ſtill a degree, of inordinate deſire. For we are not grateful, if, inſtead of taking our portion of happineſs here with chearfulneſs, and due acknowledgements for it, we only lament, that it is not, in this or that reſpect, more conſiderable: and we are not wiſe, if we embitter it, be it ever ſo ſmall, by a fruitleſs ſorrow, inſtead of making the beſt of it.

Theſe then being the exceſſes, which this commandment forbids; the duty, which of courſe it requires, is, that we *learn*, like St Paul, *in whatſoever ſtate we are, therewith to be content* *. This virtue every body practiſes in ſome caſes: for who is there, that could not mention ſeveral things which he ſhould be glad to have, yet is perfectly well ſatisfied to go without them? And would we but ſtrive to be of the ſame diſpoſition in all caſes; the ſelf-enjoyment that we ſhould reap from it, is inexpreſſible. The worldly condition of multitudes is really quite as good as it needs to be; and of many others (who do not think ſo) as good as it well can be. Now for ſuch to be anxious about mending it, is only being miſerable for nothing. And in whatever we may have cauſe to wiſh our circumſtances were better, moderate wiſhes will be ſufficient to excite a reaſonable induſtry to improve them, as far as we can: and immoderate eagerneſs will give us no aſſiſtance, but only diſquiet. More than a few conſume themſelves with longing for what indolence and deſpondency will not ſuffer them to try if they can obtain. *The deſire of the ſlothful killeth him: for his hands refuſe to labour* †. And ſometimes, on the contrary, the precipitance, with which we aim

* Phil. iv. 11. † Prov. xxi. 25.

aim at a favourite point, is the very reaſon that we overſhoot the mark, and miſs it.

But ſuppoſing the moſt ſolicitous were always the moſt likely to gain their ends: yet this likelihood will be often croſſed, both by delays and diſappointments; which to impatient tempers will be extremely grievous: and the ſaddeſt diſappointment of all will be, that they will find the moſt perfect accompliſhment of their wiſhes, after a very ſmall time, to be little or no increaſe of their happineſs. Perſons uneaſy in their preſent ſituation, or intent on ſome darling object, imagine, that could they but ſucceed in ſuch a purſuit, or had they but ſuch a perſon's good fortune or accompliſhments, then they ſhould be perfectly at eaſe, and laſtingly delighted. But they utterly miſtake. Every enjoyment palls and deadens quickly: every condition hath its unſeen inconveniencies and ſufferings, as well as its viſible advantages. And happineſs depends ſcarce at all on the pre-eminence commonly admired. For the noble, the powerful, the rich, the learned, the ingenious, the beautiful, the gay, the voluptuous, are uſually to the full as far from it, and by turns own they are, as any of the wretches, whom they ſeverally deſpiſe. Indeed, when every thing is tried round, we ſhall experience at laſt, what we had much better ſee at firſt, as we eaſily may, that the chearful compoſure of a reaſonable and religious, and therefore contented, mind, is the only ſolid felicity that this world affords; the great bleſſing of Heaven here below; that will enable us to reliſh the reſt, if we have them; and to be ſatisfied, if we have them not. What Solomon hath ſaid of wealth, he found to be equally true of every thing elſe beneath the ſun. *God giveth to a man, that is good in his ſight, wiſdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the ſinner he giveth travel, to gather and heap up.—This alſo is vanity, and vexation of ſpirit* *.

Contentment therefore being the gift of God, we ſhould earneſtly pray to him for it. And, in order to become fit objects of his favour, we ſhould frequently and thankfully recollect the many undeſerved comforts of our condition, that we may bear the afflictions of it more patiently; reaſoning with Job, *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and ſhall we not receive evil* †? Nor ſhould we fail to join with our meditations

on

* Eccl. ii. 26. † Job ii. 10.

on his paſt and preſent mercies, the firm aſſurance, which both his attributes and his promiſes furniſh, that the ſame *loving kindneſs ſhall follow us all the days of our life* *; and be exerted, though ſometimes for our correction or trial, yet always for our benefit; and ſo as to make our lot ſupportable in every variety of outward circumſtances. *Let your converſation*, therefore, *be without covetouſneſs; and be content with ſuch things as ye have: for he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee* †. Another very important conſideration, and neceſſary to be often brought to mind, is, that the ſeaſon both of enjoying the advantages, and bearing the inconveniencies, of life is ſhort: but the reward of enjoying and bearing each, as we ought, is eternal and inconceivably great.

Together with theſe reflections, let us exerciſe a ſteady care to check every faulty inclination in its earlieſt riſe. For it is chiefly indulging them at firſt, that makes them ſo hard to conquer afterwards. And yet we ſhall always find the bad conſequences of yielding to outweigh vaſtly the trouble of reſiſting: and that to bring our deſires, when they are the ſtrongeſt, down to our condition, is a much eaſier work, than to raiſe our condition up to our deſires, which will only grow the more ungovernable, the more they are pampered. Further: whatever ſhare we poſſeſs of worldly plenty, let us beſtow it on ourſelves with decent moderation, and impart of it to others with prudent liberality: for thus *knowing how to abound*, we ſhall *know* the better *how to ſuffer need* ‡, if Providence calls us to it. And laſtly, inſtead of *ſetting our affections on* any *things on earth* §, which would be a fatal neglect of the great end, that we are made for, let us exalt our views to that bleſſed place, where *godlineſs with contentment will be* unſpeakable *gain* ‖: and they who have reſtrained the inferior principles of their nature by the rules of religion, ſhall have the higheſt faculties of their ſouls *abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of God's houſe, and be made to drink of the river of his pleaſures* ¶.

Thus then you ſee both the meaning and the importance of this laſt commandment: which is indeed the guard and ſecurity of all the preceding ones. For our actions will never be

* Pſal. xxiii. 6. † Heb. xiii. 5. ‡ Phil. iv. 12. § Col. iii. 2.
‖ 1 Tim. vi. 6. ¶ Pſal. xxxvi 8.

right habitually, till our desires are so. Or if they could, our Maker demands the whole man, as he surely well may: nor till that is devoted to him, are we *meet for the inheritance of the saints of light* *.

And now, both the first and the second table of the ten commandments having been explained to you, it only remains, that we beg of God *sufficient grace* † to keep them; earnestly entreating him in the words of his church: *Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all these thy laws in our hearts, we beseech thee.*

* Col. i. 12. † 2 Cor. xii. 9.

LECTURE XXIX.

Of Man's Inability, God's grace, and Prayer to Him for it.

I Have now proceeded, in the course of these Lectures, to the end of the commandments; and explained the nature of that repentance, faith and obedience, which were promised for us in our baptism, and which we are bound to exercise, in proportion as we come to understand the obligations incumbent on us. You cannot but see by this time, that the duties, which God injoins us, are not only very important, but very extensive. And therefore a consideration will almost unavoidably present itself to your minds in the next place, what abilities we have to perform them. Now this question our catechism decides, without asking it, by a declaration, extremely discouraging in appearance; that *we are not able of ourselves, to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve him.*

Indeed, had we ever so great abilities, we must have them not of ourselves, but of our Maker: from whom all the power

ers of all creatures are derived. But ſomething further than this, is plainly meant here: that there are no powers, belonging to human nature in its preſent ſtate, ſufficient for ſo great a purpoſe. *The law of God is ſpiritual, but we are carnal, ſold under ſin* *. And that ſuch is our condition, will appear by reflecting, firſt, what it was at our birth; Secondly, what we have made it ſince.

1. As to the firſt: We all give proofs, greater or leſs of an inbred diſorder and wrongneſs in our underſtandings, will and affections. Poſſibly one proof, that ſome may give of it, may be a backwardneſs to own it. But they little conſider, how ſevere a ſentence they would paſs, by denying it, on themſelves, and all mankind. Even with our natural bad inclinations for ſome excuſe, we are blameable enough for the ill things that we do. But how much more ſhould we be ſo, if we did them all, without the ſolicitation of any inward depravity to plead afterwards in our favour? In point of intereſt therefore, as well as truth, we are concerned to admit an original proneneſs to evil in our frame: while yet reaſon plainly teaches, at the ſame time, that whatever God created was originally, in its kind, perfect and good.

To reconcile theſe two things would have been a great difficulty, had not revelation pointed out the way, by informing us, that *man* was indeed *made upright* †, but that the very firſt of human race loſt their innocence and their happineſs together; and tainting, by wilful tranſgreſſion, their own nature, tainted, by conſequence, that of their whole poſterity. Thus *by one man, ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned* ‡. We find in fact, however difficult it may be to account for it in ſpeculation, that the diſpoſitions of parents, both in body and mind, very commonly deſcend, in ſome degree, to their children. And therefore it is entirely credible, that ſo great a change in the minds of our firſt parents from abſolute righteouſneſs of temper to preſumptuous wickedneſs; accompanied with an equal change of body, from an immortal condition to a mortal one, produced perhaps, in part, by the phyſical effects of the forbidden fruit, that theſe things, I ſay, ſhould derive their fatal influences to every ſucceeding generation. For though God

* Rom. vii. 14. † Eccl. vii. 29. ‡ Rom. v. 12.

will never impute any thing to us, as our perſonal fault, which is not our own doing; yet he may very juſtly withhold from us thoſe privileges, which he granted to our firſt parents only on condition of their faultleſs obedience, and leave us ſubject to thoſe inconveniences, which followed of courſe from their diſobedience: as, in multitudes of other caſes, we ſee children in far worſe circumſtances by the faults of their diſtant forefathers, than they otherwiſe would have been. And moſt evidently, it is no more a hardſhip upon us, to become ſuch as we are by means of Adam's tranſgreſſion, than to ſuffer what we often do for the tranſgreſſions of our other anceſtors; or to have been created ſuch as we are, without any one's tranſgreſſion: which laſt, all who diſbelieve original ſin, muſt affirm to be our caſe.

But unhappy for us as the failure of the firſt man was, we ſhould be happy in compariſon, if this were all that we had to lament. Great as the native diſorder of our frame is; yet either the fall of Adam left in it, or God reſtored to it, ſome degree of diſpoſition to obedience, and of ſtrength againſt ſin: ſo that tho' *in us, that is in our fleſh, dwelleth no good thing* *, yet *after the inward man*, (the mind) *we delight in the law of God* †; and there are occaſions on which even *the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law* ‡, though neither all, nor any, without fault. And on us Chriſtians our heavenly Father confers, in our baptiſm, the aſſurance of much greater ſtrength to obey his commands, than they have. But then, if we conſider,

2. What we have made our condition ſince, we ſhall find, that inſtead of uſing well the abilities which we had, and taking the methods, which our Maker hath appointed for the increaſe of them, we have often careleſsly, and too often wilfully, miſemployed the former, and neglected the latter. Now by every inſtance of ſuch behaviour, we diſpleaſe God, weaken our right affections, and add new ſtrength to wrong paſſions: and by habits of ſuch behaviour, corrupting our hearts, and blinding our underſtandings, we bring ourſelves into a much worſe condition, than that in which we were born; and thus become doubly incapable of doing our duty. This experience proves but too plainly; though ſcripture did not teach, as it doth,

* Rom. vii. 18. † Ver. 22, 23. ‡ Rom. ii. 14.

doth, that *the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth**: that *we were ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did our mother conceive us* †: that *the carnal mind is enmity againſt God* ‡: that *without Chriſt we can do nothing* §; *and we are not ſufficient to think any thing, as of ourſelves* ‖.

Yet, notwithſtanding this, we feel within us an obligation of conſcience to do every thing that is right and good. For that obligation is in its nature unchangeable: and we cannot be made happy otherwiſe, than by endeavouring to fulfil it; though God, for the ſake of our bleſſed Redeemer, will make fit allowances for our coming ſhort of it. But then we muſt not hope for ſuch allowances as would really be unfit. Our original weakneſs indeed is not our fault; but our neglect of being relieved from it, and the additions that we have made to it are. And whatever we might have had the power of doing, if we would; it is no injuſtice to puniſh us for not doing: eſpecially when the means of enabling ourſelves continue to be offered to us through our lives. Now, in fact, the whole race of mankind, I charitably hope and believe, have, by the general grace or favour of God, the means of doing ſo much, at leaſt, as may exempt them from future ſufferings. But Chriſtians, by the *ſpecial grace* mentioned in this part of the catechiſm, are qualified to do ſo much more, as will intitle them, not for their own worthineſs, but that of the holy Jeſus, to a diſtinguiſhing ſhare of future reward.

Now the ſpecial grace of the goſpel conſiſts, partly in the outward revelation, which it makes to us, of divine truths; partly in the inward aſſiſtance, which it beſtows on us, for obeying the Divine will. The latter is the point, here to be conſidered.

That God is able, by ſecret influences on our minds, to diſpoſe us powerfully in favour of what is right, there can be no doubt: for we are able in ſome degree to influence one another thus. That there is need of his doing it, we have all but too much experience: and that therefore we may reaſonably hope for it, evidently follows. He interpoſes continually by his providence, to carry on the courſe of nature in the material world: is it not then very likely, that he ſhould interpoſe

* Gen. viii. 21. † Pſal. li. 5. ‡ Rom. viii. 7. § John xv. 5.
‖ 2 Cor. iii. 5.

poſe in a caſe, which, as far as we can judge, is yet more worthy of his interpoſition; and incline and ſtrengthen his poor creatures to become good and happy, by gracious impreſſions on their ſouls, as occaſions require? But ſtill, hope and likelihood are not certainty: and God, *whoſe ways are paſt finding out**, might have left all men to their own ſtrength, or rather indeed their own weakneſs. But whatever he doth in relation to others, which is not our concern, he hath clearly promiſed to us Chriſtians, that *his grace ſhall be ſufficient for us*†; his Holy Spirit ſhall enable us effectually to do every thing which his word requires.

We may *reſiſt*‡ his motions: or we may receive them into our ſouls, and act in conſequence of them. Every one hath power enough to do right: ſcripture, as well as reaſon, ſhows it: only we have it not reſident in us by nature; but beſtowed on us continually by our Maker, as we want it. In all good actions that we perform, *the preparation of the heart is from the Lord*§. And that *faith*, which is the fountain of all actions truly good, *is not of ourſelves, it is the gift of God*‖. But *he giveth liberally to all*¶, who aſk him; and therefore no one hath cauſe of complaint.

It is true, we are ſeldom able to diſtinguiſh this heavenly influence from the natural workings of our own minds: as indeed we are often influenced one by another without perceiving it. But the aſſurance, given in ſcripture, of its being vouchſafed to us, is abundantly ſufficient: to which, experience alſo would add ſtrong confirmation, did we but attend with due ſerioufneſs to what paſſes within our breaſts.

Our natural freedom of will is no more impaired by theſe ſecret admonitions of our Maker, than by the ſecret perſuaſions of our fellow-creatures. And the advantage of having God's help, far from making it unneceſſary to help ourſelves, obliges us to it peculiarly. We are therefore to *work out our own ſalvation*, becauſe *he worketh in us both to will and to do**. For it is a great aggravation of every ſin, that, in committing it, we *quench* the pious motions excited by *the Spirit*† of God in our hearts: and a great incitement to our endeavours of performing every duty, that with ſuch aid we may be ſure of ſucceſs.

* Rom. xi. 33. † 2 Cor. xii. 9. ‡ Acts vii. 51. § Prov. xvi. 1.
‖ Eph. ii. 8. ¶ Jam. i. 5. * Phil. ii. 12, 13. † 1 Theſ. v. 19.

ſucceſs. Our own natural ſtrength cannot increaſe, as temptations and difficulties do: but that which we receive from Heaven can. And thus it is, that we learn courage and humility at once; by knowing, that *we can do all things*, but only *through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth us* *; and therefore *not we, but the grace of God, which is with us* †.

This grace therefore being of ſuch importance to us, our catechiſm, with great reaſon, directs us *at all times to call for it by diligent prayer*. For our heavenly Father hath not promiſed, nor can we hope, that he *will give the Holy Spirit to them who* proudly diſdain, or negligently omit, to *aſk him* ‡. And hence it becomes peculiarly neceſſary, that we ſhould underſtand how to pray to him: a duty mentioned in the former part of the catechiſm, but reſerved to be explained more fully in this.

God having beſtowed on us the knowledge, in ſome meaſure, of what he is in himſelf, and more eſpecially of what he is to us; we are doubtleſs bound to be ſuitably affected by it: and to keep alive in our minds, with the utmoſt care, due ſentiments of our continual dependence on him, of reverence and ſubmiſſion to his will, of love and gratitude for his goodneſs, of humility and ſorrow for all our ſins againſt him; and earneſt deſire, that his mercy and favour may be ſhown, in ſuch manner as he ſhall think fit, to us and to all our fellow-creatures.

Now, if theſe ſentiments ought to be felt, they ought alſo to be ſome way expreſſed: not only that others may ſee we have them, and be excited to them by our example; but that we ourſelves may receive both the comfort and the improvement, which muſt naturally flow from exerciſing ſuch valuable affections. And unqueſtionably the moſt lively and moſt reſpectful manner of exerciſing them is, that we direct them to him who is the object of them; and pour out our hearts before him in ſuitable acts of homage, thankſgiving, and confeſſion; in humble petitions for ourſelves, and interceſſions for all mankind. Not that God is ignorant, till we inform him, either of our outward circumſtances, or the inward temper of our hearts. If he were, our prayers would give him very imperfect knowledge of either: for we are greatly ignorant of

* Phil. iv. 13. † 1 Cor. xv. 10. ‡ Luke xi. 13.

of both ourſelves. But the deſign of prayer is, to bring our own minds into a right frame; and ſo make ourſelves fit for thoſe bleſſings, for which we are very unfit, while we are too vain or too careleſs to aſk them of God.

The very act of prayer therefore will do us good, if we pray with attention, elſe it is worſe than nothing. And the conſequences of praying, God hath promiſed, ſhall be further good. *All things whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive* *? Not abſolutely *all things whatſoever* we deſire: for ſome of our deſires may be on ſeveral accounts unfit, and ſome would prove extremely hurtful to us. Therefore we ought to conſider well what we pray for: and eſpecially in all temporal matters refer ourſelves wholly to God's good pleaſure. Nor doth he always grant immediately what he deſigns to grant, and hath given us the fulleſt right to aſk: but delays it perhaps a while to exerciſe our patience and truſt in him: for which reaſon our Saviour directs us *always to pray, and not to faint* †. But whatever is really good, he will undoubtedly as ſoon as it is really neceſſary, give us upon our requeſt: provided further, that with our earneſt petitions, we join our honeſt endeavours: for prayer was never deſigned to ſerve inſtead of diligence, but to aſſiſt it. And therefore, if, in our temporal affairs, we are idle or inconſiderate, we muſt not expect that our prayers will bring us good ſucceſs: and if, in our ſpiritual ones, we wilfully or thoughtleſsly neglect ourſelves; we muſt not imagine, that God will amend us againſt our wills, or whilſt we continue ſupinely indifferent. But let us do our duty to the beſt of our power, at the ſame time that we pray for his bleſſing; and we may be aſſured, that nothing but an injurious diſbelief can prevent our obtaining it: on which account St James requires, that we *aſk in faith, nothing wavering* ‡.

Indeed without the encouragement given us in ſcripture, it might well be with ſome diffidence, and it ſhould be with the utmoſt reverence, that *we take upon us to ſpeak unto the Lord, who are but duſt and aſhes* §. The heathens therefore addreſſed their prayers to imaginary deities of an inferior rank, as judging themſelves unworthy to approach the Supreme One. But our rule is, *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt*

* Mat. xxi. 22. † Luke xviii. 1. ‡ Jam. i. 6. § Gen. xviii. 27.

ſhalt thou ſerve *. The affected *humility of worſhipping* even *angels*, and therefore much more ſaints, (who, if really ſuch, are yet *lower than angels* †) may, as we are taught, *beguile us of our reward* ‡: whereas we may *come boldly to the throne of* our Maker's *grace* §, tho' not in our own right, yet through the Mediator whom he hath appointed: and who hath both procured us the privilege, and inſtructed us how to uſe it, by delivering to us a prayer of his own compoſition; which might be at once a form for us frequently to repeat, and a pattern for us always to imitate.

That the Lord's prayer was deſigned as a form, appears from his own words: *After this manner pray ye;* or, tranſlating more literally, *Thus pray ye* ‖; and, which is yet more expreſs, *When ye pray, ſay, Our Father* ¶, &c. Beſides it was given by him to his diſciples on their requeſt, that he would *teach them to pray, as John alſo taught his diſciples* *: which undoubtedly was, as the great Rabbies amongſt the Jews commonly taught theirs, by a form. And accordingly this prayer hath been conſidered and uſed as ſuch, from the earlieſt ages of Chriſtianity down to the preſent.

Yet our Saviour's deſign was not, that this ſhould be the only prayer of Chriſtians: as appears both from the precepts and the practice of the apoſtles, as well as from the nature and reaſon of the thing. But when it is not uſed as a form, it is however of unſpeakable advantage as a model. He propoſes it indeed more particularly as an example of ſhortneſs. Not that we are never to make longer prayers: for he himſelf *continued all night in prayer to God* †: and we have a much longer, made by the apoſtles, in the fourth chapter of the Acts. But his intention was, to teach by this inſtance, that we are not to affect unmeaning repetitions, or any needleſs multiplicity of words, as if we *thought that we ſhould be heard for our much ſpeaking* ††. And not only in this reſpect, but every other, is our Lord's prayer an admirable inſtitution and direction for praying aright: as will abundantly appear, when the ſeveral parts of it come to be diſtinctly explained. But though ſuch explanation will ſhow, both the purport and the excellency

* Matth. iv. 10. † Pſal. viii. 5. ‡ Col. ii. 18. § Heb. iv. 16.
‖ Matth. vi. 9. ¶ Luke xi. 2. * Verſe 1. † Luke vi. 12.
†† Matth. vi. 7.

clear, more fully: yet they are to every eye visible in the main, without any explanation at all. And therefore let us conclude at present, with devoutly offering it up to God.

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

LECTURE XXX.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name.

THE prayer, which our blessed Saviour taught his disciples, doth not need to be explained, as being, in itself, and originally, obscure: For no words could be more intelligible to his apostles, than all those which he hath used throughout it. And even to us now, there is nothing that deserves the name of difficult; notwithstanding the distance of time, the change of circumstances, and the different nature and turn of the Jewish tongue from our own. But still, in order to apprehend it sufficiently, there is requisite some knowledge of religion, and the language of religion. Besides, as we all learnt it when we were young, whilst we had but little understanding, and less attention; it is not impossible, but some of us may have gone on repeating it to an advanced age, without considering it near so carefully as we ought. And this very thing, that the words are so familiar to us, may have been the main occasion, that we have scarce ever thought of their import.

port. Now we are ſenſible, it would be a great unhappineſs to have our devotions, as the Church of Rome have the principal part of theirs, in a language that we could not underſtand. But ſurely it is as great a fault, if, when we may ſo eaſily underſtand them, when we think of the matter, we think about it ſo little, that, as to all good purpoſes, it is much the ſame with praying in an unknown tongue. The Lord's Prayer, in itſelf, is very clear, very expreſſive, very comprehenſive. But all this is nothing to us, if we ſay it without knowing, or without minding what we ſay. For how excellent words ſoever we uſe; if we add no meaning to them, this can be no praying. And therefore, to make it really beneficial to us, we muſt fix deeply in our thoughts what it was intended by its Author to contain.

Now it conſiſts, you may obſerve, of three parts. I. An invocation, or calling upon God. II. Petitions offered. III. Praiſes aſcribed to him.

The Invocation is in theſe words, *Our Father, which art in heaven.* And, few as they are, they expreſs very fully the grounds on which divine worſhip ſtands.

As the whole world derives its being from God, he is on that account ſtiled, *the Father of all**. But as rational creatures are produced, not only by him, but in his image and likeneſs, he is in a ſtricter ſenſe the Father of theſe. And therefore angels and men are called in ſcripture, what the animals beneath them never are, *the ſons* †, and the *offſpring of God* ‡: in which ſenſe the prophet ſaith, *O Lord, thou art our Father, and we are all the work of thy hand* §. Now, as our Creator, he is evidently not only our Father, but alſo our Sovereign Lord.

A ſecond title God hath to this name, from that fatherly providence and goodneſs, which he exerciſes every where continually: and of which mankind hath large experience; not only in the many enjoyments, comforts, and deliverances, that he grants us, but even in the afflictions which he ſends us, always for our benefit; then more eſpecially *dealing with us as with children whom he loveth* ||.

But there is yet a third reaſon, why we call him *our Father*,

* Eph. iv. 6. † Job i. 6. ii. 1. xxxviii. 7. ‡ Acts xvii. 29.
§ Iſa. lxiv. 8. || Heb. xii. 5, &c.

ther, peculiar to us as Chriſtians; and founded on our being united by faith to his Son *our Head**, *and begotten again, through his goſpel, to a lively hope, to an inheritance reſerved in heaven for us* †: privileges ſo invaluable, that though he is doubtleſs a Father, and a tender one, to our whole ſpecies, yet, his word ſpeaks of us as the only perſons, in compariſon, that have a right to conſider him in this view. *As many as received him*, that is our bleſſed Saviour, *to them gave he power to become the ſons of God; even to them that believe on his name* ‡. *The Lord is good to all* §: but ſingularly good to thoſe, who become, by the influences of the Chriſtian covenant, ſingularly fit objects of his goodneſs. They have promiſes of the greateſt bleſſings, to which nothing, but promiſe, can intitle: pardon of ſin, aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, and life eternal; by which laſt they are made, in the happieſt ſenſe, the *children of God, being the children of the reſurrection* ||. Let us learn then, as often as we ſay, *Our Father*, to magnify in our ſouls, that gracious Redeemer, who hath made him ſo to us, more than he is to others. Let us often repeat the thankful reflection of St John, *Behold what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed on us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God* ¶: and joyfully argue as St Paul doth, *If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt* *.

Thus then the words, *Our Father*, expreſs, not only the abſolute authority, but the unſpeakable goodneſs of God: and the next, *which art in heaven*, acknowledge his glory and power.

I have already obſerved to you, in explaining the ſixth article of the Creed, that as God cannot but be, ſo he cannot but be every where: for there is nothing in any one part of ſpace to confine his preſence to that, rather than to any other. Beſides, his providence is continually acting every where: and wherever he acts, he is. Therefore Solomon juſtly declares, *The heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee* ‡. But ſtill, the ſcriptures repreſent him as manifeſting the more viſible tokens of his inexpreſſible Majeſty in one peculiar place: where he receives the homage of his holy angels, and iſſues forth

* 1 Cor. xi. 3. Eph. i. 22. † 1 Cor. iv. 15. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.
‡ John i. 12. § Pſal. cxlv. 9. || Luke xx. 36. ¶ 1 John iii. 1.
* Rom. viii. 17. ‡ 1 Kings viii. 27. 2 Chron. ii. 6. vi. 18.

forth his commands for the government of the world. This they call his *throne* *, and *tabernacle in heaven* †: of which the earthly tabernacle of Moſes was deſigned to be a figure; being directed to be *made according to the pattern ſhewed him in the Mount* ‡. That earthly tabernacle was honoured for a long time with ſplendid marks of divine reſidence: on which account, even after they were withdrawn, the Jews would be apt to conſider God, as dwelling at Jeruſalem in his temple, and *ſitting between the cherubim* §. But our bleſſed Lord, being about to aboliſh the Moſaic ordinances, enlarges the views of his diſciples, and raiſes them to that higher habitation of inconceivable glory, to which they ſhould hereafter be admitted; and on which they were in the mean while to ſet their hearts, as the ſeat of all bleſſedneſs.

But further, being *in heaven* denotes likewiſe the Almighty Power of God: agreeably to that of the Pſalmiſt, *Our God is in the Heavens: he hath done whatever he pleaſed* ||. For as a higher ſituation gives a ſuperior ſtrength and command; and accordingly in all languages, being exalted or brought low, ſignifies an increaſe or leſſening of dominion or influence: ſo repreſenting God, as placed above all, is deſigned to expreſs, in the ſtrongeſt manner, that *his kingdom ruleth over all* ¶.

When therefore we call upon *our Father which is* in Heaven, we profeſs to God our belief, that he is the Author and Preſerver of the univerſe, who governs all things with paternal care; but extends his favours eſpecially to thoſe, who, by imitating and obeying him, ſhew themſelves his true children; and therefore moſt eſpecially to ſuch, as having acquired, by the merits and grace of his Son, the neareſt relation and reſemblance to him, have thereby a covenant-right to an eternal inheritance in that bleſſed place, where he exhibits his glory, and reigns, poſſeſſed of ſovereign authority, and boundleſs power.

Now applying thus to God, under the notion of *our Father*, is excellently fitted to remind us, both of the dutiful regard, which we ought to have for him, as he himſelf pleads, *If I be a Father, where is mine honour* **? and alſo, of the kindneſs which we may expect from him, according to our Saviour's reaſon-

* Pſal. xi. 4. † Heb. viii. 1, 2. ‡ Heb. viii. 5. § Pſal. xcix. 1.
|| Pſal. cxv. 3. ¶ Pſal. ciii. 19. ** Mal. i. 6.

reaſoning, *If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that aſk him* *? Nor is this expreſſion leſs fitted to admoniſh us of copying the goodneſs, which we adore; and exerciſing mercy and bounty to our fellow-creatures, as far as we can, *that we may be*, in this excellent ſenſe, *the children of our Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil, and on the good; and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt* †. And this admonition is greatly ſtrengthened, as each of us is directed to addreſs himſelf to God, not as to his own Father merely, but as to *our Father*, the common Parent of mankind. For there is inexpreſſible force in that argument: *Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherouſly*, or in any reſpect unjuſtly or unkindly, *every man againſt his brother* ‡? And yet with greater force ſtill doth it hold, to prevent mutual injuries or unkindneſſes amongſt Chriſtians: who being, in a much cloſer and more endearing ſenſe, children of God, and brethren one to another, than the reſt of the world; ſurely ought never to be, what they are too often, remarkably deficient in that reciprocal affection, which was intended as the token, whereby *all men ſhould know them* §.

Then, at the ſame time, the conſideration, that this *our Father is in heaven*, poſſeſſed of infinite power and glory, tends greatly to inſpire us with reverence towards him, at all times, and in all places, but in our devotions peculiarly. And to this end it is pleaded by the wiſe King: *Keep thy foot, when thou goeſt to the houſe of God; be not raſh with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be haſty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth* ||. It alſo tends no leſs to remind us, what the great end of our prayers and our lives ſhould be: to obtain admittance into that bleſſed place, *where* God is, and *Chriſt ſits on his right hand* ¶. *For in his preſence is the fulneſs of joy; and at his right hand, there is pleaſure for evermore* *.

You ſee then, how many important truths and admonitions theſe few words, which begin the Lord's Prayer, include: every

* Luke xi. 13. † Mat. v. 45. ‡ Mal. ii. 10. § John xiii. 35.
|| Eccl. v. 1, 2. ¶ Col. iii. 1. * Pſal. xvi. 12.

very thing indeed, which can encourage us to pray, or diſpoſe us to pray as we ought.

The petition which immediately follows, *Hallowed be thy name*, is perhaps more liable to be repeated without being underſtood, than any of the reſt: but when underſtood, as it eaſily may be, appears highly proper to ſtand in the very firſt part of a Chriſtian's prayer. The name of God means here God himſelf, his perſon and attributes: as it doth in many other places of ſcripture, where *fearing*, or *bleſſing*, or *calling upon the Name of the Lord* is mentioned. And to *hallow his Name*, ſignifies, to think of him as a Holy Being, and behave towards him accordingly. Now the word, *holy*, hath been already more than once, in the courſe of theſe lectures explained to mean whatever is worthy of being diſtinguiſhed with ſerious reſpect. And therefore all ſuch perſons, places, things, and times, as are ſet apart from vulgar uſes, and devoted to religious ones, are ſaid in ſcripture to be holy, and commanded to be hallowed. Now theſe being generally preſerved with great care, as they always ought, from whatever may defile and pollute them; hence the term, *holy*, came to ſignify what is clean and pure. And the moſt valuable purity, beyond compariſon, being that of a mind untainted by ſin, and ſecure from tendencies towards it; holineſs more eſpecially denotes this; and may in various degrees be aſcribed to men and angels; but in abſolute perfection to none but God. For he, and he alone, is infinitely removed from all poſſibility of doing, or thinking, or approving evil.

This then is the ſenſe in which we are to acknowledge, that *holy and reverend is his name* *: this conception of him is the manner, in which we are to *hallow* it, and *ſanctify the Lord God in our hearts* †: a matter of unſpeakable importance, and the very foundation of all true religion. For if we are not fully perſuaded, that he is *of purer eyes than to behold evil* ‡ with indifference; if we imagine, that he can ever act unrighteouſly himſelf, or allow others to do ſo; that he is in any caſe the author of ſin; or eſteems and loves any thing in his creatures, but uprightneſs and goodneſs; or ſhows himſelf to be other, than a perfectly great, and wiſe, and juſt, and gracious being: ſo far as we do this, we miſtake his nature, and

* Pſal. cxi. 9. † 1 Pet. iii. 15. ‡ Hab. i. 13.

and diſhonour him; and ſet up an idol of our own fancy, inſtead of the true God. The conſequence of which will be, that in proportion as our notions of him are falſe, our worſhip, imitation, and obedience will be erroneous alſo; our piety and our morals will both be corrupted; we ſhall neglect what alone can recommend us to him; we ſhall hope to pleaſe him by performances of no value, perhaps by wicked deeds; and *the light, that is in us, will* become *darkneſs* *.

No wonder then, if we are directed to make it our firſt petition, that we and all men may *hallow God's Name*, as we ought: that ſo right a ſenſe of his nature and attributes, eſpecially his wiſdom, juſtice, and goodneſs, may prevail through the world, as may baniſh at once both profaneneſs and ſuperſtition, and engage us all to fear and love him equally: *that* we may entertain ſuch notions of Chriſtianity, as will promote its honour; and allow ourſelves in nothing, that may bring diſgrace upon it, or tempt any to *blaſpheme*, inſtead of ſanctifying, *that worthy Name by which we are called* †: but that each of us, in our ſtations, may, with all diligence, and all prudence, propagate the belief of *pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father* ‡. This is the way, and the only way poſſible, for us truly to honour him, and be truly good and happy: happy in ourſelves, and in each other; in the preſent world, and that which is to come. With this petition therefore our bleſſed Lord moſt rationally directs us to begin. And let us all remember, that what he bids us pray for in the firſt place, he will expect that we ſhould endeavour after in the firſt place; and as we acknowledge *him who hath called us, to be holy*, that we ſhould *be holy* alſo *in all manner of converſation* §.

* Mat. vi. 23. † Jam. ii. 7. ‡ Jam. i. 27. § 1 Pet. i. 15.

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LECTURE XXXI.

Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done.

THE ſecond petition of the Lord's Prayer, *Thy kingdom come*, follows very naturally after the firſt, *Hallowed be thy Name*. For hallowing the name of God, that is, entertaining juſt notions, and being poſſeſſed with a deep ſenſe, of the holineſs of his nature, his abhorrence of ſin, his juſtice and goodneſs; is the neceſſary preparative for ſubmitting to, and being faithful ſubjects of, that kingdom, for the coming of which we are directed to pray.

God indeed is, ever was, and cannot but be, Lord and King of the whole world, poſſeſſed of all right and all dominion, over all things: as the plaineſt reaſon ſhows, and the concluſion of this very prayer, in conformity to the reſt of ſcripture, acknowledges. In this ſenſe therefore we cannot pray for his kingdom, as ſomething future, but only rejoice in its being actually preſent: for what can be greater joy, than to live under the government of infinite mercy, wiſdom, and power? *The Lord reigneth: let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of iſles be glad thereof**.

But beſides this natural kingdom of God, there is a moral and ſpiritual one, founded on the willing obedience of reaſonable creatures to thoſe laws of righteouſneſs, which he hath given them. Now this, we have too plain evidence, is not yet come amongſt men ſo fully as it ought. The very firſt of human race revolted from their Maker; and their deſcendants, as both ſcripture and other hiſtory ſhows, grew, age after age, yet more and more diſobedient; till at length the inhabitants of the whole earth, inſtead of being the happy ſubjects of God's rightful empire, became, by immoral lives, and idolatrous worſhip, moſt wretched ſlaves to the uſurped dominion of the wicked one. The wiſdom and goodneſs of God made immediate proviſion, through his only Son our Lord, to

* Pſalm xcvii. 1

oppoſe this kingdom of darkneſs, as ſoon as it appeared in the world: not by his abſolute power; for obedience loſes its value, unleſs it proceed from choice; but by the rational method of inſtructions, promiſes, and warnings from Heaven, ſuperadded to what nature taught, and ſuited to the circumſtances of every age.

Theſe he gave at firſt by the patriarchs to all men promiſcuouſly: and whoever acknowledged his authority, and obeyed his laws, was a good ſubject and true member of his kingdom. But when afterwards, notwithſtanding this care, the corruption of mankind was become general, he choſe the poſterity of his ſervant Abraham, and diſtinguiſhed them by his eſpecial favour: not as caſting off the reſt of the world; for *in every nation*, at all times, *they that fear God, and work righteouſneſs, are accepted with him**: but that, in this people at leaſt, the profeſſion of faith in him, and ſubjection to him, might be kept alive: not merely for their own benefit, but the information of others alſo. With them therefore was the kingdom of God, in a peculiar degree, for 1500 years. While they flouriſhed in their own land, they held forth the light of truth to all the nations round them. And when they were led captive or diſperſed into other lands, they ſpread it yet farther: and thus were great inſtruments in preparing the reſt of mankind for that general re-eſtabliſhment of obedience to the true God, as King and Lord of all, which our bleſſed Saviour came to effect.

The goſpel diſpenſation therefore having this for its end, and being much more perfectly fitted to attain it, than any preceding manifeſtation of religion had been; the ſcripture, in a diſtinguiſhed manner, calls it *the Kingdom of God*, or *of Heaven*: both which words denote, in exactly the ſame view, that dominion, which in Daniel it is foretold, *the God of Heaven ſhould ſet up, and which ſhould never be deſtroyed* †. Our Saviour was then, after John the Baptiſt, only giving notice of its approach, and opening the way for ſetting it up, when he firſt directed his diſciples to pray, that it might come. By his death he raiſed it on the ruins of the devil's uſurpation, *over whom he triumphed on his croſs* ‡: and now it hath been many ages in the world. But ſtill it is by no means come, in that

* Acts x. 35. † Dan. ii. 44. ‡ Col. ii. 15.

that extent, and to that good effect, which we have reason to beg that it may, and to believe that it will. The largest part of mankind hath not, so much as in profession, entered into this kingdom: but lies overwhelmed in Pagan idolatry, Jewish unbelief, or Mahometan delusion. The largest part of Christians have corrupted the doctrine of Christ with grievous errors: and those who preserve the purest faith, too generally live such impure and wicked lives; that, though the kingdom of God hath indeed taken place amongst them in outward appearance, yet in that sense, which will prove at last the only important one, they are still far from it. *For the kingdom of God*, saith our Saviour, *is within you* *: and consists, as the apostle further explains it, *in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the grace of the Holy Ghost* †.

Here then is great room, and great need, for praying; that the *heathen* may become *the inheritance of* Christ, *and the uttermost parts of the* Mahometan *world his possession* ‡: that the Jews, *from whom*, for their unbelief, *the Kingdom of God hath been* so long *taken* § away, may be restored to a share in it; as the prophets, both of the Old and New Testament, have foretold they shall: and lastly, *that all who profess and call themselves Christians, may* not only *be led into the way of truth*, but *hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life* ||. How little prospect soever there may be at present of such happiness as this, yet *we have a sure word of prophesy* ¶, for the ground of our prayers, that the time shall come, when *the kingdoms of this world shall be the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ* *, in a degree that they have never been yet: when *all the people shall be righteous* †, and *know the Lord, from the greatest unto the least* ††.

But the kingdom of God upon earth, even in its best estate, is comparatively but short-lived and imperfect, indeed a mere introduction to that glorious and eternal manifestation of it in heaven, which ought ever to be the objects of our most ardent desires and requests. For as the governor, and the governed, and the great fundamental laws of government, are

* Luke xvii. 21. † Rom. xiv. 17. ‡ Psal. ii. 8. § Mat. xxi. 33.
|| Prayer for all conditions of men. ¶ 2 Pet i. 19. * Rev. xi. 15.
† Isa. lx. 21. †† Jer. xxxi. 34.

ſtill to be the ſame, in the preſent ſtate of trial, and the future one of recompence; they both make up together but one kingdom of God. And therefore, when we pray for the coming of it, we pray, in the laſt place, for the arrival of that time, when the King and Judge of all *ſhall ſit upon the throne of his glory* *, and *reward every man according to his works* †; when *the righteous ſhall ſhine forth as the ſun, in the kingdom of their Father* ‡; even that *kingdom which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world* §; and *ſhall reign with him* in it *for ever and ever* ||.

But then, as we pray for this time, we muſt prepare for it alſo: elſe we do nothing but aſk our own condemnation; as the Prophet Amos hath moſt awfully warned us: *Wo unto you that deſire the day of the Lord. To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkneſs, and not light* ¶.

To inſtruct us therefore, on what it is, that our ſhare in the kingdom of God depends, our Saviour immediately ſubjoins another petition, expreſſing it very clearly: *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.* For *not every one that ſaith unto him, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven* *: but they only who *do the will of God, ſhall receive his promiſe* †.

Indeed what God *wills* to do himſelf, that *he doth accordingly*, both *in the army of heaven, and amongſt the inhabitants of the earth; and none can ſtay his hand* ††. But what he wills us to do, that he only requires of us, as we value his favour, or fear his diſpleaſure; leaving us deſignedly that power of not doing what he bids us, without which, doing it were no virtue. But though diſobedience to his will is in our power, yet obedience is not ſo, without the aſſiſtance of his grace: which therefore, in theſe words, we deſire for ourſelves, and for all men. And ſince, by the means of prayer, we may have ſtrength to obey his will granted us; we are certainly with as much juſtice, expected to obey it, as if we had the power already of our own.

Now the will of God conſiſts in theſe two things: That we ſuffer patiently what he lays upon us, and perform faithfully what he commands us. The former of theſe; to bear with reſignation

* Matth. xxv. 31. † Matth. xvi. 27. ‡ Matth. xiii. 43. § Mat. xxv. 34. || Rev. xx. 6. xxii. 5. ¶ Amos v. 18. * Mat. vii. 21. † Heb. x. 36. †† Dan. iv. 35.

reſignation whatever, in any kind, God ſees proper to inflict; and, though we may wiſh and pray for the prevention or removal of ſufferings, yet to be content, nay, deſirous that *his will* ſhould *be done, not ours* *; may often prove a difficult, but is always an evident and neceſſary duty. For to indulge a contrary diſpoſition, is to ſet up ourſelves above our Maker; to rebel againſt his authority, deny his wiſdom, and diſtruſt his goodneſs. The ability therefore of ſubmitting meekly to his pleaſure, is undoubtedly one great thing that we are to requeſt, and endeavour to obtain.

But ſtill, as the bleſſed inhabitants of heaven ſurely have little or no occaſion for this kind of obedience, we have reaſon to think that the other, the active ſort, is the point which our Saviour deſigned we ſhould principally have in view, when we beg, that God's will may be done by us, as it is by them: by *his angels that fulfil his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his words; thoſe miniſters of his, that do his pleaſure* †. Not that we can hope to equal the ſervices of beings placed ſo much above us: but only aſpire to ſuch reſemblance of them, that our obedience may bear the ſame proportion to our abilities, which that of the heavenly ſpirits doth to theirs. Their knowledge of God's will is clear and diſtinct: on which account, the higheſt character given of human wiſdom is, to be *as an angel of God, to diſcern good and bad* ‡. It ſhould therefore, when we make uſe of this petition, be our deſire, that we alſo, in our degree, may *be not unwiſe, but underſtanding what the will of the Lord is* §, and *may abound, more and more, in knowledge and all judgment* ||. They do every thing, without exception, which they know to be God's pleaſure: whereas we are very apt to omit part, and perform the reſt but imperfectly. They do it with alacrity and chearfulneſs: whereas we too often ſhow great backwardneſs and reluctance. They do it alſo from a real principle of duty: whereas, were the truth but known, as to God it is known, a great ſhare of the good actions, upon which we value ourſelves, are perhaps only good appearances; proceeding ſome from conſtitution, ſome from worldly prudence, ſome from vanity; few, it may be doubted, principally, and fewer yet, entirely, from the love or fear of God,

* Luke xxii. 42. † Pſal. ciii. 20, 21. ‡ 2 Sam. xiv. 17.
§ Eph. v. 17. || Phil i. 9.

God, from eſteem of virtue, or hatred of ſin. In theſe reſpects then we muſt earneſtly pray, and diligently endeavour, to be like the holy angels: and were we but like them in one thing more; that they all, without exception, do the will of God, and have none amongſt them diſobedient to it; then would our earth reſemble heaven indeed. How far this is from being the caſe, we know too well. But notwithſtanding, let us comfort ourſelves with conſidering, that as the time was, when even theſe bleſſed ſpirits had a mixture of evil ones amongſt them; ſo the time will be, when we ſhall have no ſuch mixture amongſt us: but ſhall become, in this and all reſpects, *as the angels of God in heaven* *.

* Matth. xxii. 30.

LECTURE XXXII.

Give us this day our daily bread: And forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.

THE three former of the ſix petitions of the Lord's Prayer expreſs our earneſt deſires, that we, and all our fellow-creatures, may attain the great end of our creation, that is, may underſtand, receive, and practiſe, true religion, to God's honour and our own eternal happineſs: after which we proceed, in the three laſt, to aſk of him the means to this end; ſuch ſupplies of our wants, as will be needful for the performance of our duties. And they are comprehended under three heads more: The relief of our temporal neceſſities, the forgiveneſs of our paſt ſins, and the aſſiſtance of his grace againſt future temptations.

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The firſt of theſe bleſſings we requeſt, by ſaying, *Give us this day our daily bread.* All the good things of life, and all of our capacity of receiving ſupport and comfort from them, proceed, as every thing doth, from God's free gift; and therefore depend, as every thing doth, on his free pleaſure: for what he hath beſtowed, he can, with juſt the ſame eaſe, at any time, take away. He hath placed things indeed in a regular, and what we call natural, courſe and order. But this order is not only of his own appointing, but his own preſerving too. *He* it is, that *maketh his ſun to riſe* *; that *giveth us rain from heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons, filling our hearts with food and gladneſs* †. Were he only thus kind to us all in general, it would certainly be our duty to acknowledge his kindneſs, and pray for the continuance of it. But as we learn from ſcripture further, that his providence extends, even in the minuteſt inſtances, to each of us in particular; and that not the ſmalleſt thing comes to paſs, but by his appointment, or wiſe permiſſion ‡; this furniſhes additional reaſons for applying to him, that his continual ſuperintendency may be ever exerciſed towards us for our good. We know not indeed with certainty, in theſe matters, what will be good for us. But ſtill, ſince he hath given us deſires, inſeparable from our frame, of enjoying life to its ordinary term, with a competent ſhare of the ſeveral accommodations which contribute to make it agreeable; it muſt be lawful to expreſs thoſe deſires to him in a proper manner. And this our Saviour directs us how to do, when he bids us petition for *our daily bread.*

The word *bread,* as it frequently ſignifies in ſcripture all ſorts of food, ſo it may very naturally ſignify, what it doth in this prayer, all ſorts of things requiſite in human life. This Agur meant, when he prayed, that God would *feed him with food* (in the original it is *bread*) *convenient for him* §. And this we mean in common diſcourſe, as often as we ſpeak of perſons getting their *bread.* But then it muſt by no means be extended beyond things requiſite; thoſe, without which we are unable either to ſubſiſt at all, or however conveniently and comfortably. Not that deſires of further advantages in the world are univerſally unlawful. But they are ſo apt to enlarge,

* Mat. v. 45. † Acts xiv. 17. ‡ Matt. x. 29, 30. Luke xii. 6, 7.
§ Prov. xxx. 8.

large, and ſwell into extravagant and ſinful paſſions; into ſchemes of luxury, or vanity, or covetouſneſs; that we have uſually much more need to reſtrain and check, than authorize them, by aſking the accompliſhment of them from God; leſt we be guilty of what St James condemns *aſking amiſs, that we may conſume it upon our luſts* *.

It is therefore only for ſuch a ſhare of worldly good, as to a reaſonable and moderate mind will appear ſufficient, that our Saviour allows us here to pray; in the ſpirit which Agur, in the prayer juſt mentioned, expreſſes; *Give me neither poverty nor riches: feed me with food convenient for me. Leſt I be full and deny thee, and ſay, who is the Lord? or leſt I be poor, and ſteal, and take the Name of God in vain* †. For indeed, though the temptations of extreme poverty are very great; yet the tendency of wealth and eaſe, and power, to ſenſuality and pride and forgetfulneſs of God is ſo exceeding ſtrong, that a well-inſtructed and conſiderate mind would rather ſubmit, than chuſe to be placed in a condition of abundance and eminence. For preſerving the order, and conducting the affairs of the world, ſome muſt be in ſuch ſtations: but let all who are, look well to their ways; and let none of their inferiors envy them.

It ought to be further obſerved here, that our bleſſed Lord hath not only confined us to pray for *our bread*, but *our daily bread*; to be given us, as we aſk for it, day by day: intending, doubtleſs, to make us remember and acknowledge, that our dependance on God is continual, from one moment to another: that they, who have the moſt of this world, have it only during his pleaſure; and are bound, both to aſk, and receive every day's enjoyment of it, as a new gift from him: while, at the ſame time, they who have leaſt may be aſſured, that what he hath commanded them to pray for, he will ordinarily not fail to beſtow upon them; by bleſſing their endeavours; or by ſtirring up the charity of others towards them, if they are not.

For as to thoſe who can labour, induſtry is the method by which God hath thought fit to give them their bread; and therefore, by which they ought to ſeek it. They have no title to it any other way; St Paul having directed, *that if any*

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* James iv. 13. † Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

*one will not work, neither ſhould he eat**. Nor muſt they work only to ſupply their preſent neceſſities: but, by diligence and frugality, lay up ſomething, if poſſible, for future exigencies alſo: learning of *the ant, which provideth her meat in the ſummer, and gathereth her food in the harveſt* †.

So that applying for our daily bread to God, is far from excluding a proper care to uſe the appointed means of procuring it for ourſelves. But if our care be a preſumptuous one, and void of regard to the diſpoſer of all things; we provoke him to blaſt our faireſt hopes. And if it be an anxious and diſtruſtful one, we think injuriouſly of him to whom we pray: who can as eaſily give us the bread of to-morrow, as he gave us that of yeſterday. Nay, if our worldly cares, though they do not diſquiet our minds, yet engroſs them: if we carry our attention to this world ſo far as to forget the next; or imagine ourſelves to be ſecure in ſtores *laid up for many years* ‡, than in God's good providence: this alſo is very unſuitable to the ſpirit, both of our Lord's Prayer, and of his whole religion; which commands us to *ſeek firſt the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs* §, and *not to truſt in uncertain riches, but in him, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy* ||.

I ſhall only add two obſervations more, which have been made very juſtly on this petition ¶: that, ſince we ask our bread from God, we ought not to accept it from the devil; that is, to gain our ſubſiſtance by any unlawful means: and that, ſince we do not ſay, *Give me my daily bread;* but, *give us ours;* we entreat God to ſupply the wants of others, as well as our own. Now the means which he hath provided for ſupplying the wants of the helpleſs poor, is the charity of the rich. And to pray him, that they may be relieved, and yet withhold from them what he hath deſigned for their relief, is juſt that piece of inconſiſtence, or hypocriſy, which St James ſo ſtrongly expoſes. *If a brother or a ſiſter, be naked, and deſtitute of daily food; and one of you ſay unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed, and be ye filled; notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are needful to the body: what doth it profit* *?

From our temporal wants, we proceed next to a much more important

* 2 Theſſ. iii. 10. † Prov. vi. 8. ‡ Luke xii. 19. § Matt. vi. 33.
|| 1 Tim. vi. 17. ¶ By Bp Blacknall. * Jam. ii. 15, 16.

important concern, our ſpiritual ones: and here we aſk in the firſt place, what it is very fit we ſhould, pardon and mercy. *Forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.* The forgiveneſs of ſins having been already explained, under that article of the Creed which relates to it; I ſhall only take notice at preſent of the argument, which we are directed to uſe in pleading for it, which is likewiſe the eſpecial condition of our obtaining it; that *we alſo forgive**, as we hope to be forgiven. And concerning this, two things ought to be underſtood: what that forgiveneſs is, to which we are bound: and how far the exerciſe of it will avail us.

Now the obligation to forgiveneſs means, not that the magiſtrate is to omit puniſhing malefactors; *for he is the miniſter of God, a revenger, to execute wrath upon him that doth evil*†: not that the rulers of the church are to forbear ſpiritual cenſures againſt notorious offenders; for the ſcripture hath appointed them, for the amendment of ſinners, and the preſervation of the innocent, when they are likely to have theſe good effects: not that private perſons do amiſs in bringing tranſgreſſors to juſtice; for neglecting it would be in general only a ſeeming kindneſs to them, and a real miſchief to human ſociety: not that we are forbidden to make reaſonable demands on ſuch as withhold our dues, or do us any damage; for recovering a debt is a very different thing from revenging an injury: nor laſtly, that we are always bound, when perſons have behaved ill to us, either to think as well of them as before; which may be impoſſible; or to truſt and favour them as much, which may be unwiſe. But our obligation to forgive doth mean, and abſolutely require, that civil governors be moderate and merciful; and eccleſiaſtical ones make uſe of diſcipline *to edification, not to deſtruction*‡: that, in our private capacity, we paſs by all offences, which, with ſafety to ourſelves, and the public we can: that where we muſt puniſh, we do it with reluctance; and as gently as the caſe will permit; and where we muſt defend or recover our rights; we do it with the leaſt expence, and the leaſt uneaſineſs to the adverſe party, that may be: that we never be guilty of injuſtice to others, becauſe they have been guilty of it to us; and never refuſe them proper favours, merely becauſe we have been refuſed

* Luke xi. 4. † Rom. xiii. 4. ‡ 2 Cor. x. 8. xiii. 10.

refuſed ſuch favours by them; much leſs becauſe we have not obtained from them what it was not fit we ſhould: that we look upon little provocations, as trifles: and be careful, not to think great ones greater than they are: that we be willing to make thoſe who have diſpleaſed us, all ſuch allowances to the full, as our common frailty and ignorance demand: that we always wiſh well to them; and be ready, as ſoon as ever we have real cauſe, to think well of them: to believe their repentance; and, how great or many ſoever their faults may have been, to accept it; and reſtore them to as large a ſhare of our kindneſs and friendſhip, as any wiſe and good perſon, unintereſted in the queſtion, would think ſafe and right: always remembering, in every caſe of injury, how very apt we are to err on the ſevere ſide; and how very much better it is, to err on the merciful one.

This is the temper of forgiveneſs to our fellow-creatures: and it is plainly a good and fit temper. Let us therefore now conſider further, what influence it will have towards our Maker's forgiving us. Our Saviour undoubtedly lays a peculiar ſtreſs on it for this purpoſe; both by inſerting it, as a condition, into the body of his prayer; and inſiſting on it, as a neceſſary one, in his words immediately after the prayer. But ſtill, we muſt obſerve, he doth not mention it as the cauſe, that procures our forgiveneſs: for *God ſaveth us, not by* this, or any other *works of righteouſneſs, which we do, but according to his mercy; which he hath ſhed on us abundantly through Jeſus Chriſt; that being juſtified by his grace, we may be heirs of eternal life* *. Our pardoning others is no more than a qualification, requiſite to our receiving that final pardon from God, which our Saviour, through the Divine goodneſs, hath merited by his death, on that condition. Nor is it the only qualification neceſſary, though it be a principal one. For the reſt of God's laws were given in vain, if obſerving this one would ſecure his favour: and *Chriſt* would be found *the miniſter of ſin* †, if he had taught, that the ſingle good diſpoſition of forgiveneſs would be ſufficient, let a perſon have ever ſo many bad ones. But it is plain, that throughout the whole ſermon on the mount, in which this prayer is delivered, he makes the performance of every part of our duty the condition of

* Tit. iii. 5,—7. † Gal. ii. 17

our acceptance. In the very beginning of it, he hath promiſed heaven to ſeveral other virtues, as well as here to this; and the meaning is, not that perſons may get thither by any one that they will; for nobody ſure is ſo bad, as to have none at all: but that each of them ſhall have its proper ſhare, in fitting us for that mercy and reward, which however, with leſs of them we ſhall never obtain. Our imperfections in all will indeed be pardoned: but not our continuance in a wilful neglect of any.

Still, though a ſpirit of forgiveneſs to our brother is by no means the whole, that God requires in order to forgive us; yet it is a quality, often ſo difficult, always ſo important, and ſo peculiarly needful to be exerciſed by us, when we are intreating our Maker to exerciſe it towards us; that our Saviour had great reaſon to place it in the ſtrong light, which he hath done; and even to place it ſingle; ſince his deſign could not eaſily be underſtood to be any other, than to engage our particular attention to what deſerves it ſo much. For if we will not, for the love of God, and in obedience to his command, pardon our fellow-creatures the few and ſmall injuries, which they are able to do us: (when perhaps we may have done many things to provoke them, and comparatively can have done little to oblige or ſerve them) how ſhould we ever expect, that he will forgive us the numerous and heinous offences, which we have committed againſt him; from whom we have received all that we have, on whom we depend for all that we can hope for, to whom therefore we owe the moſt unreſerved duty, and the moſt affectionate gratitude?

Let us remember then, that ſince we pray to be forgiven, only as we forgive; ſo often as we uſe theſe words, we pray in effect for God's vengeance upon ourſelves, inſtead of his mercy, if we forgive not. And therefore, let us apply to him continually for grace to do in earneſt, what we profeſs to do in this petition: let us carefully examine our hearts and our conduct, that we may not cheat ourſelves, for we cannot cheat God, with falſe pretences of obſerving this duty, while indeed we tranſgreſs it; let us utterly *put away from us, all bitterneſs, and wrath, and clamour, and evil-ſpeaking, with all malice; and be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another; even as* we hope, that *God, for Chriſt's ſake, will forgive us**.

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* Eph. iv. 31 32.

LECTURE XXXIII.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

WE ſhould be very unfit to aſk for the pardon of our paſt ſins; and could neither hope to obtain it, nor indeed continue long the better for it; if we did not earneſtly deſire, at the ſame time, to avoid ſin for the future. And therefore, after the petition, *forgive us our treſpaſſes*, moſt properly follows, *and lead us not into temptation.*

The word *temptation* very often ſignifies no more, than trial; any oppoſition or difficulty, that may call forth our virtues into vigorous practice, and, by ſo doing, both ſtrengthen and make them known: not indeed to God, who always knows our hearts; but to ourſelves and others: to thoſe around us at preſent; to all mankind, and the holy angels hereafter. Now in this general ſenſe, our whole life on earth is, and was intended to be, a ſtate of temptation: in which, as the ſcripture expreſſes it, *God* himſelf *tempts* men *; that is, proves and exerciſes them. And accordingly, St James directs us to *count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations;* adding a very good reaſon for it: *Bleſſed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he ſhall receive the crown of life; which the Lord hath promiſed to thoſe that love him*†. The more love to God we thus ſhow, the more we exert our inward good principles and habits, and by exerting, improve them: the greater reward we ſhall obtain. When therefore we ſay, *Lead us not into temptation;* we do not pray, that we may not be tried at all: for we know, that we muſt, even for our own good.

But the word here ſtands for dangerous trials, provocations, and

* Gen. xxii. 1. Deut. iv. 34. 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. † Jam. i. 2, 12.

there ſhould be evil angels, as well as evil men, of the greateſt abilities and accompliſhments, is, if rightly conſidered, no great wonder: and that both ſhould entice us to ſin, is no reaſonable diſcouragement: for let us but apply to God, and we ſhall not be left in the power of either. What the power of wicked ſpirits is, we are not told in ſcripture: and it is no part of religion, in the leaſt, to believe idle ſtories about them. Of this we are ſure, that they have no power, but what God permits: and he will never permit them to do, what ſhall prove, in the end, any hurt to thoſe, who ſerve and fear him. More eſpecially we are ſure, that they cannot in the leaſt, either force us into ſinning, or hinder us from repenting. Invite or diſſuade us they may, by ſuggeſting falſe notions of the pleaſure, or profit, or harmleſſneſs of ſin: by repreſenting God, as too good to be angry, or too ſevere to be reconciled: by deſcribing to our imaginations, repentance to be ſo eaſy at any time, that it is needleſs now; or ſo difficult now, that it is too late and impoſſible: by putting it into our thoughts, that we are ſo good, we may be confident and careleſs; or ſo wicked, we muſt abſolutely deſpair. It concerns us therefore greatly, *not to be ignorant of their devices* *. But, provided we keep on our guard; earneſtly apply to God, and are true to ourſelves; neither their temptations, nor thoſe of the whole world, ſhall prevail againſt us. For then only, as St James gives us to underſtand, *is every man tempted* dangerouſly, *when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and enticed* †. The enemy within therefore is the moſt formidable one: and againſt this it is chiefly, that we are to *watch, and pray, that we enter not into temptation:* remembering always, that how *willing* ſoever *the Spirit* may be, yet *the fleſh is weak* ‡.

And now let us obſerve, in the laſt place, under this head, that as we are to pray againſt being led into temptation ourſelves, we ſhould be very careful, never to lead others into it; but do every thing that we can, to keep them out of it, and deliver them from it: and that, as begging God's help that we may ſtand, muſt be grounded on a ſtrong ſenſe of our proneneſs to fall; we ſhould ſhow great compaſſion towards them, who, through the ſame proneneſs, have fallen. *Brethren, if a man*

* 2 Cor. ii. 11. † James i. 14. ‡ Mat. xxvi. 41.

thou be overtaken in a fault; ye, which are ſpiritual, reſtore ſuch a one in the ſpirit of meekneſs: conſidering thyſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted *.

Thus we have gone through the ſix petitions, which compoſe the ſecond part of the Lord's Prayer; and ſhown it to be worthy of its Author, by diſtinctly comprehending, in ſo little room, whatever is neceſſary for the honour of God, and our own good, both temporal and ſpiritual. What remains further, is, to ſpeak briefly of the third part, which concludes the whole, by aſcribing to our heavenly Father the praiſe *due unto his name* †: acknowledging here more expreſsly, what indeed hath been throughout implied, that his *is the kingdom*, the rightful authority and ſupreme dominion over all: his *the power*, by which every thing juſt and good is brought to paſs; his therefore *the glory* of whatever we his creatures do, or enjoy, or hope for; of whatever this univerſe, and the whole ſcheme of things which it comprehends, hath had, or now hath, or ever ſhall have in it, awful or gracious, and worthy of the admiration of men and angels. And as all dignity and might and honour are his; ſo they are his *for ever and ever*: originally, independently and unchangeably. *From everlaſting to everlaſting he is God* ‡: *the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever* §.

Theſe words then are, at once, an act of homage to his greatneſs, and thankſgiving to his goodneſs: both which ought ever to have a place in our prayers; and the concluſion is a very proper place. For the infinite perfections of God our Maker, which we thus celebrate, are the beſt reaſon poſſible for every petition that we have offered to him: and therefore our bleſſed Lord introduces them as the reaſon. *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.* Beſides, ending with theſe acknowledgments will leave them freſh and ſtrong upon our minds: eſpecially as we finiſh all with that ſolemn aſſeveration, *Amen*: which is a word uſed in ſcripture, only upon ſerious and important occaſions, to confirm the truth and ſincerity of what is promiſed, wiſhed, or affirmed. It relates therefore equally to the whole of the prayer: and is in effect declaring, that we do heartily believe whatever we have ſaid, and heartily deſire whatever we have aſked.

* Gal. vi. 1. † Pſal. xxix. 2. ‡ Pſal. xc. 2. § Heb. xiii. 8.

This expreſſion therefore may remind us, that our prayers ſhould always be compoſed, both in ſuch a language, and ſuch words in that language, as all, that are to uſe or join in them, are well acquainted with. For elſe, as St Paul argues, *How ſhall he, that occupieth the room of the unlearned, ſay Amen: ſeeing he underſtandeth not what thou ſayeſt* *?

And it ſhould likewiſe remind us very ſtrongly of another thing, if poſſible, yet more important: that we ſhould never ſay to God, what we cannot ſay with the utmoſt truth of heart. Now with what truth, or what face, can any perſon, that lives in any ſin, repeat the prayer which our Lord hath taught us, and ſay *amen* to it; when every ſentence in it, if well conſidered, is inconſiſtent with a bad life? Let us therefore conſider both it and ourſelves very carefully, that we may offer up our devotions always in an acceptable manner. For *the ſacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight* †.

* 1 Cor. xiv. 16. † Prov. xv. 8.

LECTURE XXXIV.

The nature and number of the Sacraments.

THE far greateſt part of the duties which we owe to God, flow, as it were, of themſelves, from his nature and attributes, and the ſeveral relations to him, in which we ſtand, whether made known to us by reaſon or ſcripture. Such are thoſe, which have been hitherto explained to you: the ten commandments; and prayer for the grace, which our fallen condition requires, in order to keep them. But there are ſtill ſome other important precepts peculiar to Chriſtianity, and deriving their whole obligation from our Saviour's inſtitution of them: concerning which it is highly requiſite that our catechiſm

techiſm ſhould inſtruct us, before it concludes. And theſe are the two ſacraments.

The word *ſacrament*, by virtue of its original in the Latin tongue, ſignifies any ſacred or holy thing or action: and among the heathens was particularly applied to denote ſometimes a pledge, depoſited in a ſacred place*; ſometimes an oath, the moſt ſacred of obligations; and eſpecially that oath of fidelity, which the ſoldiery took to their general. In ſcripture it is not uſed at all. By the early writers of the weſtern church it was uſed to expreſs almoſt any thing relating to our holy religion; at leaſt any thing that was figurative, and ſignified ſomewhat further than at firſt ſight appeared. But afterwards a more confined uſe of the word prevailed by degrees: and in that ſtricter ſenſe, which hath long been the common one, and which our catechiſm follows, the nature of a ſacrament comprehends the following particulars.

1. There muſt be *an outward and viſible ſign*: the ſolemn application of ſome bodily and ſenſible thing or action, to a meaning and purpoſe which in its own nature it hath not. In common life, we have many other ſigns to expreſs our meanings, on occaſions of great conſequence, beſides words. And no wonder then, if, in religion, we have ſome of the ſame kind.

2. In a ſacrament, the outward and viſible ſign muſt denote *an inward and ſpiritual grace given unto us*: that is, ſome favour freely beſtowed on us from Heaven; by which our inward and ſpiritual condition, the ſtate of our ſouls, is made better. Moſt of the ſignificative actions, that we uſe in religion, expreſs only our duty to God. Thus kneeling in prayer is uſed to ſhow our reverence towards him to whom we pray. And ſigning a child with the croſs, after it is baptized, declares our obligation not to be aſhamed of the croſs of Chriſt. But a ſacrament, beſides expreſſing, on our part, duty to God, expreſſes, on his part, ſome grace or favour towards us.

3. In order to intitle any thing to the name of a ſacrament, a further requiſite is, that it be *ordained by Chriſt himſelf*. We may indeed uſe, on the foot of human authority alone, actions,

* Eden. Elem. Jur. Civ. p. 238. Gronov. in Plaut. Rud. 5. 3, 21.

that ſet forth either our ſenſe of any duty, or our belief in God's grace. For it is certainly as lawful to expreſs a good meaning by any other ſign as by words. But then, ſuch marks as theſe, which we commonly call ceremonies, as they are taken up at pleaſure, may be laid aſide again at pleaſure; and ought to be laid aſide, whenever they grow too numerous, or abuſes are made of them, which cannot eaſily be reformed: and this hath frequently been the caſe. But ſacraments are of perpetual obligation: for they ſtand on the authority of Chriſt; who hath certainly appointed nothing to be for ever obſerved in his church, but what he ſaw would be for ever uſeful. Nor doth every appointment of Chriſt, though it be of perpetual obligation, deſerve the name of a ſacrament: but thoſe, and no other, which are.

4. Not only ſigns of grace, but *means* alſo, *whereby we receive the ſame*. None but our bleſſed Lord could appoint ſuch means: and which of his ordinances ſhould be ſuch, and which not, none but himſelf could determine. From his word therefore we are to learn it: and then, as we hope to attain the end, we muſt uſe the means. But when it is ſaid, that the ſacraments are means of grace; we are not to underſtand, either that the performance of the mere outward action doth, by its own virtue, produce a ſpiritual effect in us; or that God hath annexed any ſuch effect to that alone: but that he will accompany the action with his bleſſing, provided it be done as it ought; with thoſe qualifications which he requires. And therefore, unleſs we fulfil the condition, we muſt not expect the benefit.

Further; calling the ſacraments, means of grace, doth not ſignify them to be means by which we merit grace: for nothing but the ſufferings of our bleſſed Saviour can do that for us; but means, by which what he hath merited is conveyed to us.

Nor yet are they the only means of conveying grace: for reading, and hearing, and meditating upon the word of God, are part of the things which he hath appointed for this end: and prayer is another part, accompanied with an expreſs promiſe, that, if we *aſk, we ſhall receive* *. But theſe, not being ſuch actions as figure out and repreſent the benefits which they derive

* John xvi. 24.

derive to us, though they are means of grace, are not ſigns of it; and therefore do not come under the notion of ſacraments.

But,

5. A ſacrament is not only a ſign or repreſentation of ſome heavenly favour, and a means whereby we receive it, but alſo *a pledge to aſſure us thereof*. Not that any thing can give us a greater aſſurance, in point of reaſon, of any bleſſing from God, than his bare promiſe can do: but that ſuch obſervances, appointed in token of his promiſes, affect our imaginations with a ſtronger ſenſe of them, and make a deeper and more laſting, and therefore more uſeful, impreſſion on our minds. For this cauſe, in all nations of the world, repreſentations by action have ever been uſed as well as words, upon ſolemn occaſions: eſpecially upon entering into and renewing treaties and covenants with each other. And therefore in condeſcenſion to a practice, which, being ſo univerſal among men, appears to be founded in the nature of man; God hath graciouſly added to his covenant alſo, the ſolemnity of certain outward inſtructive performances; by which he declares to us, that as ſurely as our bodies are waſhed by water, and nouriſhed by bread broken and wine poured forth and received; ſo ſurely are our ſouls purified from ſin by the baptiſm of repentance; and, ſtrengthened in all goodneſs, by partaking of that mercy, which the wounding of the body of Chriſt, and the ſhedding of his blood, hath obtained for us. And thus theſe religious actions, ſo far as they are performed by God's miniſter, in purſuance of his appointment, are an earneſt or pledge on his part, which (as I obſerved to you) was one ancient ſignification of the word ſacrament: and ſo far as we join in them, they are an obligation, binding like an oath, on our part, as ſhall be hereafter ſhown you; which was the other primitive meaning of the word.

Having thus explained to you the deſcription of a ſacrament given in the catechiſm; let us now conſider, what things we have in our religion that anſwer to it. For the Papiſts reckon no leſs than ſeven ſacraments. And though this number was not named for above 1000 years after Chriſt; nor fixed by the authority of even their own church, till 200 years ago, that is, ſince the Reformation; yet now they accuſe us for not agreeing with them in it, but acknowledging only two.

The

The first of their five is Confirmation. And if this be a sacrament, we administer it as well as they, indeed much more agreeably to the original practice; and are therefore intitled, at least to the same benefit from it. But though Christ did indeed *put his hands on children, and bless them* *; yet we do not read, that he appointed this particular ceremony for a means of conveying grace. And though the apostles did use it after him, as others had done before him; yet there is no foundation to ascribe any separate efficacy to the laying on of hands, as distinct from the prayers that accompany it: or to look upon the whole of confirmation as any thing else, than a solemn manner of persons taking upon themselves their baptismal vow, followed by the solemn address of the Bishop and the congregation, that they may ever keep it: in which address, laying on of hands is used, partly as a mark of good will to the person for whom the prayers are offered up; and partly also as a sign, that the fatherly hand of God is over all who undertake to serve him: yet without any claim of conveying his grace particularly by it; but only with intention of praying for his grace along with it: which prayers however we have so just ground to hope he will hear, that they who neglect this ordinance, though not a sacrament, are greatly wanting both to their interest and their duty.

Another sacrament of the Church of Rome is Penance, which they make to consist of particular confession to the priest of every deadly sin, particular absolution from him, and such acts of devotion, mortification, or charity, as he shall think fit to enjoin. But no one part of this being required in scripture, much less any outward sign of it appointed, or any inward grace annexed to it; there is nothing in the whole that hath any appearance of a sacrament; but too much suspicion of a contrivance to gain undue influence and power.

A third sacrament of theirs is, extreme unction. But their plea for it is no more than this. St James, at a time when miraculous gifts were common, directed *the elders of the church*, who usually had those gifts, to *anoint the sick with oil* †; as we read the disciples did, whilst our Saviour was on earth ‡; in order to obtain by the *prayer of faith*, (that *faith* which could *remove mountains* §) the recovery, if God saw fit, of their bodily

* Mark x. 16. † James v. 14, 15. ‡ Mark vi. 13.
§ Mat. xvii. 20. xxi. 21. Mark xi. 23.

bodily health; and the forgiveneſs of thoſe ſins for which their diſeaſe was inflicted, if they had committed any ſuch. And upon this the Church of Rome, now all ſuch miraculous gifts are ceaſed, continues notwithſtanding to anoint the ſick, for a quite different purpoſe: not at all for the recovery of their health; for they do not uſe it till they think them very nearly, if not quite paſt recovery; nor indeed for the pardon of their ſins, for theſe, they ſay, are pardoned upon confeſſion, which commonly is made before it; but chiefly, as themſelves own, to procure compoſedneſs and courage in the hour of death: a purpoſe not only unmentioned by St James, but inconſiſtent with the purpoſe of recovery, which he doth mention, and very often impoſſible to be attained. For they frequently anoint perſons after they are become intirely ſenſeleſs. And yet, in ſpite of all theſe things, they will needs have this practice owned for a ſacrament: which indeed is now, as they manage it, a mere piece of ſuperſtition.

Another thing, which they eſteem a Chriſtian ſacrament, is matrimony: though it was ordained, not by Chriſt, but long before his appearance on earth, in the time of man's innocency; and hath no outward ſign appointed in it, as a means and pledge of inward grace. But the whole matter is, that they have happened moſt ridiculouſly to miſtake their own Latin tranſlation of the New Teſtament: where St Paul, having compared the union between the firſt married pair, Adam and Eve, to that between Chriſt, the Second Adam, and his Spouſe the Church; and having ſaid that *this is a great myſtery* *; a figure, or compariſon, not fully and commonly underſtood: the old Interpreter, whoſe verſion they uſe, for *myſtery* hath put *ſacrament*: which in his days, as I ſaid before, ſignified any thing in religion that carried a hidden meaning: and they have underſtood him of what we now call a ſacrament. Whereas if every thing that once had that name, in the larger ſenſe of the word, were at preſent to have it in a ſtricter ſenſe; there would be a hundred ſacraments, inſtead of the ſeven, which they pretend there are.

The fifth and laſt thing, which they wrongly inſiſt on our honouring with this title, is holy orders. But, as there are three Orders in the Church, Biſhops, Prieſts, and Deacons; here

* Eph. v. 32.

here would be three ſacraments, if there were any; but indeed there is none. For the laying on of hands in ordination is neither appointed, nor uſed, to convey or ſignify any ſpiritual grace: but only to confer a right of executing ſuch an office in the church of Chriſt. And though prayers, for God's grace and bleſſing on the perſon ordained, are indeed very juſtly and uſefully added; and will certainly be heard, unleſs the perſon be unworthy; yet theſe prayers, on this occaſion, no more make what is done a ſacrament, than any other prayers for God's grace, on any other occaſion.

However, as I have already ſaid of confirmation, ſo I ſay now of orders and marriage, if they were ſacraments, they would be as much ſo to us, as to the Romaniſts, whether we called them ſacraments or not. And if we uſed the name ever ſo erroneouſly, indeed if we never uſed it at all; as the ſcripture hath never uſed it; that could do us no harm, provided, under any name, we believe but the things, which Chriſt hath taught; and do but the things which he hath commanded: for on this, and this alone, depends our acceptance, and eternal ſalvation.

LECTURE XXXV.

Of Baptiſm.

HAVING already explained to you the nature of a ſacrament; and ſhown you, that five of the ſeven things, which the church of Rome calls by that name, are not intitled to it; there remain only two that are truly ſuch; and theſe two are plainly ſufficient: one, for our entrance into the Chriſtian covenant; the other during our whole continuance in it: *Baptiſm, and the Supper of the Lord.* However, as the word ſacrament is not a ſcripture one, and hath at different times been differently underſtood: our catechiſm doth not require

quire it to be ſaid abſolutely, that the ſacraments are *two only*; but *two only neceſſary to ſalvation:* leaving perſons at liberty to comprehend more things under the name, if they pleaſe, provided they inſiſt not on the neceſſity of them, and of dignifying them with this title. And even theſe two, our church very charitably teaches us not to look upon as indiſpenſably, but as *generally neceſſary*. Out of which general neceſſity, we are to except thoſe particular caſes, where believers in Chriſt, either have not the means of performing their duty in reſpect to the ſacraments, or are innocently ignorant of it, or even excuſably miſtaken about it.

In explaining the ſacrament of *baptiſm*, I ſhall ſpeak, firſt of *the outward and viſible ſign*, then of *the inward and ſpiritual grace*.

As to the former; Baptiſm being intended for the ſign and means of our purification from ſin; water, the proper element for purifying and cleanſing, is appointed to be uſed in it. There is indeed a ſect, ſprung up amongſt us within a little more than an hundred years, that deny this appointment: and make the Chriſtian Baptiſm ſignify only the pouring out of the gift of the Holy Ghoſt upon a perſon. But our Saviour expreſsly requires that we be *born of water*, as well as *of the Spirit*, to *enter into the kingdom of God* *. And not only John, his forerunner, *baptized with water* †, but his diſciples alſo, by his direction, *baptized* in the ſame manner, even *more than John* ‡. When therefore he bade them afterwards *teach all nations, baptizing them* §: what baptiſm could they underſtand, but that, in which he had employed them before? And accordingly, we find they did underſtand that. Philip, we read, baptized the Samaritans ‖: not with the Holy Ghoſt; for the apoſtles went down ſome time after to do that themſelves ¶: but with water undoubtedly, as we find in the ſame chapter, he did the Eunuch: where the words are, *Here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized? And they went down to the water: and he baptiſed him* ‖. Again, after Cornelius, and his friends, had received the Holy Ghoſt, and ſo were already baptized in that ſenſe, Peter aſks, *Can any man forbid water,*

* John iii. 5. † Mat. iii. 11. ‡ John iv. 1, 2. § Mat. xxviii. 19.
‖ Acts viii. 12. ¶ Ver. 14, &c. ‖ Ver. 36 38.

that theſe ſhould not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghoſt, as well as we *? When therefore John ſays, that *he baptized with water, but Chriſt ſhall baptize with the Holy Ghoſt* †; he means, not that Chriſtians ſhould not be baptized with water, but that they ſhould have the Holy Ghoſt poured out upon them alſo, in a degree that John's diſciples had not. When St Peter ſays, *The baptiſm which ſaveth us, is not the waſhing away the filth of the fleſh* ‡; he means, it is not the mere outward act, unaccompanied by a ſuitable inward diſpoſition. When St Paul ſays, that *Chriſt ſent him not to baptize, but to preach the goſpel* §; he means, that preaching was the principal thing he was to do in perſon: to baptize, he might appoint others under him; and it ſeems, commonly did: as St Peter did not baptize Cornelius and his friends himſelf, but *commanded them to be baptized* ‖; and we read in St John, that *Jeſus baptized not, but his diſciples* ¶.

Water-baptiſm therefore is appointed. And why the Church of Rome ſhould not think water ſufficient in baptiſm, but aim at mending what our Saviour hath directed, by mixing oil and balſam with it, and dipping a lighted torch into it, I leave them to explain.

The preciſe manner in which water ſhall be applied in baptiſm, ſcripture hath not determined. For the word, *baptize*, means only to waſh: whether that be done by plunging a thing under water, or pouring the water upon it. The former of theſe; burying, as it were, the perſon baptized, in the water and raiſing him out of it again, without queſtion was anciently the more uſual method: on account of which, St Paul ſpeaks of baptiſm, as repreſenting both the death, and burial, and reſurrection of Chriſt, and what is grounded on them, our being *dead and buried to ſin*; renouncing it, and being acquitted of it; and our riſing again, to *walk in newneſs of life* *; being both obliged and enabled to practiſe, for the future, every duty of piety and virtue. But ſtill, the other manner of waſhing, by pouring or ſprinkling of water, ſufficiently expreſſes the ſame two things: our being by this ordinance purified from the guilt of ſin, and bound and qualified to keep ourſelves pure from the defilement of it. Beſides, it very naturally

* Acts x. 47. † Mat. iii. 11. ‡ 1 Pet. iii. 21. § 1 Cor. i. 17.
‖ Acts x. 48. ¶ John iv. 2. * Rom. vi. 4, 11. Col. ii. 12.

rally repreſents that *ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt* *, to which our ſalvation is owing. And the uſe of it ſeems not only to be foretold by the Prophet Iſaiah, ſpeaking of our Saviour, *He ſhall ſprinkle many nations* †, that is, many ſhall receive his baptiſm; and by the Prophet Ezekiel, *Then will I ſprinkle clean water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean* ‡: but to be had in view alſo by the apoſtle, where he ſpeaks of *having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, and our bodies waſhed with pure water* §. And though it was leſs frequently uſed in the firſt ages, it muſt almoſt of neceſſity have been ſometimes uſed: for inſtance, when baptiſm was adminiſtered, as we read in the Acts it was, to ſeveral thouſands at once ‖; when it was adminiſtered on a ſudden in private houſes, as we find it, in the ſame book, to the goaler and all his family, the very night in which they were converted ¶: or when ſick perſons received it; in which laſt caſe, the preſent method was always taken, becauſe the other of dipping them, might have been dangerous. And from the ſame apprehenſion of danger in theſe colder countries, pouring the water is allowed, even when the perſon baptized is in health. And the particular manner being left at liberty, that is now univerſally choſen, which is looked on as ſafer: becauſe, were there more to be ſaid for the other than there is, God *will have mercy, and not ſacrifice* **.

But waſhing with water is not the whole outward part of this ſacrament. For our Saviour commanded his apoſtles, not only to *baptize all nations*, but to *baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt* ††. Sometimes indeed the ſcripture ſpeaks of baptiſm, as if it were adminiſtered only *in the Name of the Lord Jeſus* ‡‡. But it fully appears ⁂, that the Name of the Holy Ghoſt, was uſed at the ſame time: and therefore that of the Father, we may be ſure. Now, being baptized *in the Name* of theſe three may ſignify, being baptized by virtue of their authority. But the exacter tranſlation is, *into the Name:* and the fuller import of the expreſſion is, by this ſolemn action taking upon us their name; (for ſervants are known by the name of their

* 1 Pet. i. 2. † Iſa. lii. 15. ‡ Ezek. xxxvi. 25. § Heb. x. 22.
‖ Acts ii. 41. ¶ Acts xvi. 33. ** Hoſ. vi. 6. Mat. ix. 13. xii. 7.
†† Mat. xxviii. 19. ‡‡ Acts ii. 38. x. 48. xix. 5. ⁂ Acts xix. 2, 3.

Maſter) and profeſſing ourſelves devoted to the faith, and worſhip, and obedience of theſe three; our Creator, our Redeemer, our Sanctifier. In this profeſſion, the whole of Chriſtianity is briefly comprehended, and on this foundation therefore the ancient Creeds are all built.

The ſecond and principal thing in baptiſm, *the inward and ſpiritual grace*, is ſaid in the catechiſm to be, *a death unto ſin, and a new birth unto righteouſneſs: for that being by nature born in ſin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.* The former part of theſe words refers to the old cuſtom of baptizing by dipping, juſt now mentioned: and the meaning of the whole is this. Our firſt parents having, by diſobedience in eating the forbidden fruit, corrupted their own nature; ours, being derived from them, received of neceſſity an original taint of the ſame diſorder: and therefore coming into the world under the ill effects of their ſin; and being, from the time of our entering into it, prone to ſin ourſelves: we are ſaid to be *born in ſin.* And they having alſo, by the ſame diſobedience, forfeited their immortality; we, as deſcending from them, became mortal of courſe: and inheriting by way of natural conſequence, what they ſuffered as a mark of God's wrath; we, their children, are ſaid to be *children of wrath.* Not that God, with whatever diſapprobation he muſt view our native depravity, is, or, properly ſpeaking, can be angry with us perſonally, for what was not our perſonal fault. But he might undoubtedly both refuſe us that immortality, which our firſt parents had forfeited, and to which we have no right; and leave us without help, to the poor degree of ſtrength that remained to us in our fallen condition; the effect of which muſt have been, that had we done our beſt, as we were intitled to no reward from his juſtice, ſo it had been ſuch a nothing, that we could have hoped for little, if any, from his bounty: and had we not done our beſt, as no man hath, we had no aſſurance, that even repentance would ſecure us from puniſhment. But what in ſtrict juſtice he might have done, in his infinite goodneſs he hath not done. For the firſt covenant being broken by Adam, he hath entered into a new one with mankind, thro' Jeſus Chriſt: in which he hath promiſed to free us, both from the mortality, which our firſt parents had brought upon us, by reſtoring us to life again, and from the inability, by the

powerful

powerful aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit. Nay, further yet, he hath promiſed, (and without it the reſt would have been of ſmall uſe) that ſhould we, notwithſtanding his aſſiſtance, fail in our duty, when we might have performed it; as we have all failed, and made ourſelves, by that means, *children of wrath*, in the ſtricteſt and worſt ſenſe: yet, on moſt equitable terms, he would ſtill receive us to mercy anew. And thus the Chriſtian covenant, delivering us, if we are faithful to it, from every thing we had to fear, and beſtowing on us every thing we could hope, brings us into a ſtate ſo unſpeakably different from our former; that it is juſtly expreſſed by being dead to that, and born into another. And this new birth being effected by the grace or goodneſs of God, external and internal, we, the children of it, are properly called *the children of grace*. Now baptiſm is not only a ſign of this grace; (as indeed it ſignifies very naturally the waſhing off both of our original corruption, and our actual guilt) but the appointed way of entering into the covenant that entitles us to ſuch grace; the *means whereby we receive the ſame, and a pledge to aſſure us thereof*.

Indeed the mere outward act of being baptized is, as St Peter, in the words already mentioned, very truly expreſſes it, the mere *putting away of the filth of the fleſh*; unleſs it be made effectual to ſave us, as he teaches in the ſame place it muſt, by *the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God* *: that is, by the ſincere ſtipulation and engagement of *repentance, whereby we forſake ſin; and faith, whereby we believe the promiſes of God, made to us in that ſacrament*. For it is impoſſible that he ſhould forgive us our paſt ſins, unleſs we are ſorry for them, and reſolved to quit them: and it is as impoſſible that we ſhould quit them effectually, unleſs a firm perſuaſion of his helping and rewarding us excite and ſupport our endeavours. Theſe two things therefore we ſee our catechiſm juſtly mentions as neceſſary, in anſwer to the queſtion, *What is required of perſons to be baptized?* Both have been explained in their proper place, and therefore I enlarge on neither here.

But hence ariſes immediately another queſtion: If theſe conditions are neceſſary, *why are infants baptized, when by reaſon of their tender age they cannot perform them?* And as this difficulty appears to ſome a great one, I ſhall give a fuller ſolution of it than the ſhortneſs of a catechiſm would eaſily permit.

* 1 Peter iii. 21.

permit. Repentance and faith are requiſite, not before they are poſſible, but when they are poſſible. Repentance is what infants need not as yet, being clear of perſonal guilt: and happy would it be, were they never to need it. Faith, it may be reaſonably preſumed, by the ſecurity given for their Chriſtian education, they will have, as ſoon as they have occaſion to exert it. And in the mean time, baptiſm may very fitly be adminiſtered: becauſe God, on his part, can certainly expreſs by it, both his removing, at preſent, the diſadvantages which they lie under by the ſin of Adam: and his removing hereafter, on proper conditions, the diſadvantages which they may come to lie under by their own ſins. And though they cannot, on their parts, expreſsly promiſe to perform theſe conditions; yet they are not only bound to perform them, whether they promiſe it or not; but (which is the point that our catechiſm inſiſts on) their ſureties promiſe for them, that they ſhall be made ſenſible, as ſoon as may be, that they are ſo bound; and ratify the engagement in their own perſons: which when they do, it then becomes complete. For it is by no means neceſſary, that a covenant ſhould be executed, by both the parties to it, at juſt the ſame time: and as the Chriſtian Covenant is one of the greateſt equity and favour, we cannot doubt, to ſpeak in the language of our Liturgy, *but that God favourably alloweth the charitable work of bringing infants to his holy baptiſm.* For *the promiſe* of the Covenant being expreſsly ſaid to belong *to us and to our children* *, without any limitation of age; why ſhould they not all, ſince they are to partake of the promiſe, partake alſo of the ſign of it? eſpecially, ſince the infants of the Jews were, by a ſolemn ſign, entered into their covenant; and the infants of proſelytes to the Jews, by this very ſign, amongſt others, of baptiſm. So that, ſuppoſing the apoſtles to imitate either of theſe examples, as they naturally would, unleſs they were forbidden, which they were not: when they baptized (as the ſcripture, without making any exception, tells us they did) whole families at once †; we cannot queſtion but they baptized (as we know the primitive Chriſtians, their ſucceſſors, did) *little children* among the reſt; concerning whom our Saviour ſays, that *of ſuch is the kingdom*

* Acts ii. 39. † Acts xvi. 15, 33.

*dom of God**: and St Paul ſays, *they are holy* †; which they cannot be reputed, without entering into the goſpel covenant: and the only appointed way of entering into it is by baptiſm; which therefore is conſtantly repreſented in the New Teſtament as neceſſary to ſalvation.

Not that ſuch converts, in ancient times, as were put to death for their faith, before they could be baptized, loſt their reward for want of it. Not that ſuch children of believers now, as die unbaptized by ſudden illneſs, or unexpected accidents, or even by neglect, (ſince it is none of their own neglect) ſhall forfeit the advantages of baptiſm. This would be very contrary to that mercy and grace, which abounds thro' the whole of the goſpel diſpenſation. Nay, where the perſons themſelves do deſignedly, through miſtaken notions, either delay their baptiſm, as the Anabaptiſts; or omit it entirely, as the Quakers; even of theſe it belongs to Chriſtian charity not to judge hardly, as excluded from the goſpel covenant, if they die unbaptized; but to leave them to the equitable judgement of God. Both of them indeed err; and the latter eſpecially have, one ſhould think, as little excuſe for their error as well can be: for ſurely there is no duty of Chriſtianity which ſtands on a plainer foundation, than that of baptizing with water in the Name of the Holy Trinity. But ſtill, ſince they ſolemnly declare, that they believe in Chriſt, and deſire to obey his commands; and omit water-baptiſm only becauſe they cannot ſee it is commanded; we ought (if we have cauſe to think they ſpeak truth) by no means to conſider them in the ſame light with total unbelievers.

But the wilful and the careleſs deſpiſers of this ordinance: who, admitting it to be of God's appointment, neglect it notwithſtanding; theſe are not to be looked on as within his covenant, And ſuch as, though they do obſerve it for form's ſake, treat it as an empty inſignificant ceremony, are very unworthy of the benefits which it was intended to convey. And, bad as theſe things are, little better, if not worſe, will be the caſe of thoſe, who, acknowledging the ſolemn engagements into which they have entered by this ſacrament, live without care to make them good. For to the only valuable purpoſe,

* Mark x. 14. † 1 Cor. vii. 14.

purpoſe, of God's favour and eternal happineſs, *he is not a* Chriſtian, *which is one outwardly; neither is that* baptiſm *which is outward in the fleſh: but he is a* Chriſtian, *which is one inwardly; and* baptiſm *is that of the heart, in the ſpirit, and not in the letter; whoſe praiſe is not of men, but of God**.

* Rom. ii. 28, 29.

LECTURE XXXVI.

Of the LORD'S SUPPER.

PART I.

AS by the Sacrament of Baptiſm we enter into the Chriſtian Covenant; ſo by that of the Lord's Supper we profeſs our thankful continuance in it: and therefore the firſt anſwer of our catechiſm, concerning this ordinance, tells us, it was appointed *for the continual remembrance of the ſacrifice of the death of Chriſt, and of the benefits which we receive thereby.* Now the nature and benefits of this ſacrifice have been already explained, in their proper places. I ſhall therefore proceed to ſhow, that the Lord's Supper is rightly ſaid here to be *ordained for a remembrance* of it; not a repetition, as the church of Rome teaches.

Indeed every act, both of worſhip and obedience, is in ſome ſenſe a ſacrifice to God, humbly offered up to him for his acceptance. And this ſacrament, in particular, being a memorial and repreſentation of the ſacrifice of Chriſt, ſolemnly and religiouſly made, may well enough be called, in a figurative way of ſpeaking, by the ſame name with what it commemorates and repreſents. But that he ſhould be really and literally offered up in it, is the directeſt contradiction that can be,

not only to common ſenſe, but alſo to ſcripture, which expreſsly ſays, that he was not to be *offered often, for then muſt he often have ſuffered; but hath appeared once to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf**, and after that *for ever ſat down on the right hand of God; for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified* †.

This ordinance then was appointed, not to repeat, but to commemorate the ſacrifice of Chriſt; which though we are required to do, and do accordingly, more or leſs explicitly, in all our acts of devotion, yet we are not required to do it by any viſible repreſentation, but that of the Lord's Supper: of which therefore our catechiſm teaches, in the ſecond anſwer, that *the outward part, or ſign, is bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received.* And indeed he hath ſo clearly commanded both to be received, that no reaſonable defence in the leaſt can be made, either for the ſect uſually called Quakers, who omit this ſacrament entirely; or for the Church of Rome, who deprive the laity of one half of it, the cup; and forbid all but the prieſt to do, what Chriſt hath appointed all without exception to do. They plead indeed, that all, whom Chriſt appointed to receive the cup; that is, the apoſtles; were prieſts. But their church forbids the prieſts themſelves to receive it, excepting thoſe who perform the ſervice: which the apoſtles did not perform, but their Maſter. And beſides, if the appointment of receiving the cup belongs only to prieſts, that of receiving the bread too muſt relate only to prieſts: for our Saviour hath more expreſsly directed *all* to drink of the one, than to eat of the other. But they own, that his appointment obliges the laity to receive the bread: and therefore it obliges them to receive the cup alſo: which that they did accordingly, 1 Cor. xi. makes as plain as words can make any thing: nor was it refuſed them for 1200 years after. They plead farther, that adminiſtering the holy ſacrament is called in ſcripture, *breaking of bread*, without mentioning the cup at all. And we allow it. But when common feaſts are expreſſed in ſcripture by the ſingle phraſe of *eating bread*, ſurely this doth not prove that the gueſts drank nothing: and if, in this religious feaſt, the like phraſe could prove, that the laity did not partake of the cup,

* Heb. ix. 25, 26. † Heb. x. 12, 14.

it will prove equally, that the prieſts did not partake of it either. They plead in the laſt place, that by receiving the bread, which is the body of Chriſt, we receive in effect the cup, which is the blood at the ſame time: for the blood is contained in the body. But here, beſides that our Saviour, who was ſurely the beſt judge, appointed both; they quite forget that this ſacrament is a memorial of his blood being ſhed out of his body: of which without the cup, there can be no commemoration: or, if there could, the cup would be as needleſs for the clergy as for the laity.

The outward ſigns therefore, which Chriſt hath commanded to be received, equally received, by all Chriſtians, are bread and wine. Of theſe the Jews had been accuſtomed to partake, in a ſerious and devout manner, at all their feaſts after a ſolemn bleſſing, or thankſgiving to God, made over them, for his goodneſs to men. But eſpecially at the feaſt of the Paſſover, which our Saviour was celebrating with his diſciples, when he inſtituted this holy ſacrament; at that feaſt, in the above-mentioned thankſgiving, they commemorated more at large the mercies of their God, dwelling chiefly however on their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. Now this having many particulars reſembling that infinitely more important redemption of all mankind from ſin and ruin, which our Saviour was then about to accompliſh; he very naturally directed his diſciples, that their ancient cuſtom ſhould for the future be applied to this greateſt of divine bleſſings, and become the memorial of *Chriſt, their Paſſover, ſacrificed for them* *: as indeed the bread broken aptly enough repreſented his body; and the wine poured forth moſt expreſſively figured out his blood, ſhed for our ſalvation. Theſe therefore, as the third anſwer of our catechiſm very juſtly teaches, are *the inward part* of this ſacrament, *or the thing ſignified.*

But the Church of Rome, inſtead of being content with ſaying, that the bread and wine are ſigns of the body and blood of Chriſt, inſiſt on it, that they are turned into the very ſubſtance of his body and blood: which imagined change they therefore call tranſubſtantiation. Now, were this true, there would be no outward ſign left: for they ſay, it is converted into the thing ſignified: and by conſequence there would be no

* 1 Cor. v. 7.

no ſacrament left: for a ſacrament is *an outward ſign of an inward grace.*

Beſides, if our ſenſes can in any caſe inform us what any thing is, they inform us that the bread and wine continue bread and wine. And if we cannot truſt our ſenſes, when we have full opportunity of uſing them all; how did the apoſtles know that our Saviour taught them, and performed miracles; or how do we know any one thing around us? But this doctrine is equally contrary to all reaſon too. To believe that our Saviour took his own body, literally ſpeaking, in his own hands, and gave the whole of that one body to every one of his apoſtles, and that each of them ſwallowed him down their throats, though all the while he continued ſitting at the table before their eyes: to believe, that the very ſame one individual body, which is now in heaven, is alſo in many thouſands of different places on earth; in ſome, ſtanding ſtill upon the altar; in others carrying along the ſtreets; and ſo in motion, and not in motion, at the ſame time: to believe, that the ſame body can come from a great diſtance, and meet itſelf, as the ſacramental bread often doth in their proceſſions, and then paſs by itſelf, and go away from itſelf to the ſame diſtance again; is to believe the moſt abſolute impoſſibilities and contradictions. If ſuch things can be true, nothing can be falſe; and if ſuch things cannot be true, the church that teaches them cannot be infallible, whatever arts of puzzling ſophiſtry they may uſe to prove either that or any of their doctrines. For no reaſonings are ever to be minded againſt plain common ſenſe.

They muſt not ſay, this doctrine is a myſtery. For there is no myſtery, no obſcurity in it: but it is as plainly ſeen to be an error, as any thing elſe is ſeen to be a truth. And the more ſo, becauſe it relates, not to any infinite nature, as God; but entirely to what is finite, a bit of bread and a human body. They muſt not plead, that God can do all things. For that means only that he can do all things that can be done: not that he can do what cannot be done: make a thing be this and not be this, be here and elſewhere, at the ſame time: which is doing and undoing at once, and ſo in reality doing nothing. They muſt not alledge ſcripture for abſurdities, that would ſooner prove ſcripture falſe, than ſcripture can prove them true. But it no where teaches them.

We own that our Saviour says, *This is my body which is broken* *, and, *This is my blood, which is shed* †. But he could not mean literally. For as yet his body was not broken, nor his blood shed: nor is either of them in that condition now. And therefore the bread and wine neither could then, nor can now, be turned into them as such. Besides our Saviour said at the same time, *This cup is the New Testament in my blood* ‡. Was the substance of the cup then changed into the New Testament? And if not, why are we to think the substance of the bread and wine changed into his body and blood? The apostle says, *the Rock*, that supplied the *Israelites* with water in the wilderness, *was Christ* §: that is, represented him. Every body says, such a picture is such a person, meaning the representation of him. Why then may not our Saviour's words mean so too?

The Romanists object, that though what represents a thing naturally, or by virtue of a preceding institution, may be called by its name, yet such a figure as this, in the words of a new institution, would not be intelligible ‖. But the representation here is natural enough: and though the institution was new, figurative speech was old. And the apostles would certainly rather interpret their Master's words by a very usual figure, than put the absurdest sense upon them that could be. They object further, that if he had not meant literally, he would have said, not, *this*, but *this bread*, is my body ¶. But we may better argue, that if he had meant literally, he would have said, in the strongest terms, that he did. For there was great need, surely, of such a declaration. But we acknowledge, that the bread and wine are more than a representation of his body and blood: they are the means, by which the benefits arising from them are conveyed to us; and have thence a further title to be called by their name. For so the instrument, by which a prince forgives an offender, is called his pardon, because it conveys his pardon; the delivery of a writing is called giving possession of an estate *; and a security for a sum of money, is called the sum itself; and is so in virtue

* 1 Cor. xi. 24. † Mat. xxvi. 28. ‡ Luke xxii. 20. 1 Cor. xi. 25.
§ 1 Cor. x. 4. ‖ Preuves de la Religion, Vol. IV. p. 166.
¶ Ib. p. 168. * See Cod. 8. 54. 1.

tue and effect, though it is not in ſtrictneſs of ſpeech, and reality of ſubſtance. Again: Our Saviour, we own, ſays in St John, that *he is the bread of life*; that *his fleſh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed*: that *whoſo eateth the one and drinketh the other, hath eternal life*; and that, without doing it, *we have no life in us* *. But this, if underſtood literally, would prove, not that the bread in the ſacrament was turned into his fleſh, but that his fleſh was turned into bread. And therefore it is not to be underſtood literally, as indeed he himſelf gives notice: *The fleſh profiteth nothing: the words which I ſpeak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life* †: It is not the groſs and literal, but the figurative and ſpiritual, eating and drinking; the partaking by a lively faith of an union with me, and being inwardly nouriſhed by the fruits of my offering up my fleſh and blood for you, that alone can be of benefit to the ſoul.

And as this is plainly the ſenſe, in which he ſays, that *his fleſh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed*: ſo it is the ſenſe, in which the latter part of the third anſwer of our catechiſm is to be underſtood; that *the body and blood of Chriſt are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper*: Words intended to ſhow, that our Church as truly believes the ſtrong aſſurances of ſcripture concerning this ſacrament, as the Church of Rome doth; only takes more care to underſtand them in the right meaning: which is, that though, in one ſenſe, all communicants equally partake of what Chriſt calls his body and blood, that is, the outward ſigns of them; yet, in a much more important ſenſe, *the faithful* only, the pious and virtuous receiver, eats his fleſh and drinks his blood; ſhares in the life and ſtrength derived to men from his incarnation and death; and through faith in him, becomes by a vital union, one with him; *a member*, as St Paul expreſſes it, *of his fleſh and his bones* ‡: certainly not in a literal ſenſe; which yet the Romaniſts might as well aſſert, as that we eat his fleſh in a literal ſenſe; but in a figurative and ſpiritual one. In appearance, the ſacrament of Chriſt's death is given to all alike: but *verily and indeed*, in its beneficial effects, to none beſides the faithful. Even to the unworthy communicant he is preſent, as he is wherever we meet together in his Name:

* John vi. 48, 53,—55. † Ver. 63. ‡ Eph. v. 30.

Name: but in a better and moſt gracious ſenſe, to the worthy ſoul; becoming, by the inward virtue of his Spirit, its food and ſuſtenance.

This real preſence of Chriſt in the ſacrament, his church hath always believed. But the monſtrous notion of his bodily preſence was ſtarted 700 years after his death: and aroſe chiefly from the indiſcretion of preachers and writers of warm imaginations, who, inſtead of explaining judiciouſly the lofty figures of ſcripture language, heightened them, and went beyond them: till both it and they had their meaning miſtaken moſt aſtoniſhingly. And when once an opinion had taken root that ſeemed to exalt the holy ſacrament ſo much, it eaſily grew and ſpread; and the more for its wonderful abſurdity, in thoſe ignorant and ſuperſtitious ages: till at length, 500 years ago, and 1200 years after our Saviour's birth, it was eſtabliſhed for a goſpel-truth by the pretended authority of the Romiſh church. And even this had been tolerable in compariſon, if they had not added idolatrous practice to erroneous belief: worſhipping, on their knees, a bit of bread for the Son of God. Nor are they content to do this themſelves, but with moſt unchriſtian cruelty, curſe and murder thoſe, who refuſe it.

It is true, we alſo kneel at the ſacrament, as they do: but for a very different purpoſe: not to acknowledge *any corporal preſence of Chriſt's natural fleſh and blood;* as our church, to prevent all poſſibility of miſconſtruction, expreſsly declares; adding, that *his body is in heaven, and not here:* but to worſhip him, who is every where preſent, the inviſible God. And this poſture of kneeling we by no means look upon, as in itſelf neceſſary; but as a very becoming appointment; and very fit to accompany the prayer and praiſes, which we offer up at the inſtant of receiving; and to expreſs the inward ſpirit of piety and humility, on which our partaking worthily of this ordinance, and receiving benefit from it, depend. But the benefits of the holy ſacrament, and the qualifications for it, ſhall, God willing, be the ſubject of two other diſcourſes. In the mean time, *conſider what hath been ſaid; and the Lord give you underſtanding in all things**.

* 2 Tim. ii. 7.

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LECTURE XXXVII.

Of the LORD'S SUPPER.

PART II.

THE doctrine of our catechiſm, concerning the Lord's Supper, hath been already ſo far explained, as to ſhow you, that it *was ordained*, not for the repetition, but *the continual remembrance of the ſacrifice of Chriſt*; that *the outward ſigns* in it *are bread and wine*; both *which the Lord hath commanded to be received* by all Chriſtians: and both which are accordingly received, and not changed and tranſubſtantiated into the real and natural *body and blood of Chriſt*: which however *the faithful*, and they only, do, under this repreſentation of it, *verily and indeed* receive into a moſt beneficial union with themſelves; that is, do *verily and indeed*, by a ſpiritual connection with their incarnate Redeemer and Head through faith, partake, in this ordinance, of that heavenly favour and grace, which by offering up his body and blood he hath procured for his true diſciples and members.

But of *what benefits* in particular *the faithful* partake in this ſacrament, through the grace and favour of God, our catechiſm teaches in the fourth anſwer, to which I now proceed: and which tells us it is, *The ſtrengthening and refreſhing of our ſouls by the body* and *blood of Chriſt, as our bodies are by the bread and wine* *. Now both the truth and the manner of this refreſhment of our ſouls will appear by conſidering the nature of the ſacrament, and the declarations of ſcripture concerning it.

Indeed the due preparation for it, the ſelf-examination required in order to it, and the religious exerciſes which that examination

* Αλλα πασαθαι αναχθι θοης επι νηυσιν Αχαιης
Σιτα και οινιζε· το γαρ μενος εστι και αλκη.
Hom. Il. T. v. 160, 161.

examination will of course point out to us, must previously be of great service; as you will see, when I come to that head. And the actual participation will add further advantages of unspeakable value.

Considered as an act of obedience to our Saviour's command, *Do this in remembrance of me*, it must be beneficial to us; for all obedience will. Considered as obedience to a command, proceeding principally, if not solely, from his mere will and pleasure; it contributes to form us into a very needful, a submissive, and implicitly dutiful temper of mind. But further: it is the most eminent and distinguished act of Christian worship: consisting of the devoutest thankfulness to God for the greatest blessing, which he ever bestowed on man; attended, as it naturally must, with earnest prayers, that the gift may avail us, to our spiritual and eternal good. And it is much more likely to affect us very strongly and usefully, because it expresses his bounty and our sense of it, not as our daily devotions do in words alone, but in the less common, and therefore more solemn way, of visible signs and representations: *setting forth evidently before our eyes*, to use St Paul's language, *Christ crucified amongst us* *. This, of necessity, unless we are strangely wanting to ourselves, must raise the warmest affections of love that our hearts are capable of, to him who hath given himself for us. And as love is the noblest principle of religious behaviour, what tends so powerfully to animate our love, must in proportion tend to perfect us in every branch of duty, according to the just reasoning of the same apostle: *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and he died for all, that they who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him, which died for them, and rose again* †. When our Saviour said to his disciples, *If ye love me, keep my commandments* ‡; he knew the motive was no less engaging, than it is reasonable. And therefore he adds very soon after, *If a man love me he will keep my words* §.

But this institution carries in it a yet further tie upon us; being, as our blessed Lord himself declared, *the New Testament in his blood* ‖: the memorial and acknowledgment of the second

* Gal. iii. 1. † 2 Cor. v. 15, 16. ‡ John xiv. 15.
§ Verse 23. ‖ Luke xxii. 20.

mond covenant between God and man, which was founded on his death; and requires a ſincere faith and obedience on our part, as the condition of grace and mercy on his. *Every one that nameth the name of Chriſt*, is bound to *depart from iniquity* *. But the obligation is redoubled on them who come to his table as friends, and *make a covenant with him* by partaking of his *ſacrifice* †. If theſe live wickedly, it is declaring with the boldeſt contempt, that they conſider *Chriſt as the miniſter of ſin* ‡; and *count the blood of the covenant*, wherewith they profeſs to be *ſanctified, an unholy thing* §. Partaking therefore of this holy ordinance is renewing, in the moſt awful manner, our engagements to the ſervice which we owe, as well as our claims to the favours that God hath promiſed. It is our ſacrament, our oath to be faithful *ſoldiers* ‖ under *the* great *Captain of our ſalvation* ¶: which ſurely we cannot take thus, without being efficaciouſly influenced to the religious obſervance of it, in every part of a Chriſtian life.

But there is one part eſpecially, and one of the utmoſt importance, to which this inſtitution peculiarly binds us, that of univerſal good-will and charity. For commemorating, in ſo ſolemn an action, the love of Chriſt to us all, cannot but move us to that mutual imitation of his love, which, juſt before his appointing this holy ſacrament, he ſo earneſtly and affectionately enjoined his followers, as the diſtinguiſhing badge of their profeſſion. *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you* ⁂. *Hereby ſhall all men know, that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to another* ††. Then beſides; commemorating his love jointly, as the ſervants of one Maſter, and members of one body, partaking of the ſame Covenant of Grace, and the ſame hope of everlaſting happineſs, muſt, if we have any feeling of what we do, incline us powerfully to that reciprocal union of hearts, which indeed the very act of communicating ſuggeſts and recommends to us. *For we, being many, are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread* ‡‡.

* 2 Tim. ii. 19. † Pſal. l. 5. ‡ Gal. ii. 17. § Heb. x. 29.
‖ 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4. ¶ Heb. ii. 10. ⁂ John xv. 12, 13, 14.
†† John xiii. 35 ‡‡ 1 Cor. x. 17.

Another grace, which this commemoration of our Saviour's death peculiarly excites, is humility of ſoul. We acknowledge by it, that we are ſinners; and have no claim to pardon or acceptance, but through his ſacrifice, and his mediation, whoſe merits we thus plead, and ſet forth before God. And this conſideration muſt ſurely diſpoſe us very ſtrongly to a thankful obſervance of his commands, to watchfulneſs over our own hearts; to mildneſs towards others. *For we ourſelves alſo have been fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived: and not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, but according to his mercy, God hath ſaved us, which he ſhed on us abundantly through Chriſt Jeſus our Saviour* *.

And as this ſacrament will naturally ſtrengthen us in all theſe good diſpoſitions, we cannot doubt, but God will add his bleſſing to the uſe of ſuch proper means, eſpecially being appointed means. For ſince he hath threatened puniſhments to unworthy receivers, he will certainly beſtow rewards on worthy ones. Our Saviour hath told us, that *his fleſh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed* †: ſuſtenance and refreſhment to the ſouls of men. When he bleſſed the bread and wine, he undoubtedly prayed, and not in vain, that they might be effectual for the good purpoſes, which he deſigned ſhould be attained by this holy rite. And St Paul hath told us, if it needs, more expreſsly, that *the cup, which we bleſs, is the communion*, that is, the communication to us, *of the blood of Chriſt; and the bread, which we break, of the body of Chriſt* ‡: that is, of a ſaving union with him, and therefore of the benefits procured to us by his death: which are, forgiveneſs of our offences; for he hath ſaid, *This is my blood of the New Teſtament, which is ſhed for the remiſſion of ſins* §: Increaſe of the gracious influences of the Holy Ghoſt; for the apoſtle hath ſaid, plainly ſpeaking of this ordinance, that *we are all made to drink into one Spirit* ‖: and everlaſting life; for *whoſo eateth his fleſh, and drinketh his blood, dwelleth in Chriſt, and Chriſt in him, and he will raiſe him up at the laſt day* ¶. Whence a father of the apoſtolic age, *Ignatius*, calls the euchariſt, *the medicine*

* Tit. iii. 3, 5, 6. † John vi. 55. ‡ 1 Cor. x. 16.
§ Mat. xxvi. 28. ‖ 1 Cor. xii. 13. ¶ John vi. 54, 56.

*divine of immortality; a preservative, that we should not die, but live for ever in Jesus Christ**.

But then what hath been already hinted to you must be always carefully observed; that these benefits are to be expected only from partaking worthily of it: *for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily*, St Paul hath told us, *is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*†; that is, guilty of irreverence towards it, and *eateth and drinketh judgment to himself*‡. Our translation indeed hath it, *damnation to himself*. But there is so great danger of this last word being understood here in too strong a sense, that it would be much safer, and exacter, to translate it, (as it is often translated elsewhere, and once in a few verses after this passage, and from what follows ought undeniably to be translated here) *judgment*, or *condemnation*: not to certain punishment in another life, but to such marks of God's displeasure as he sees fit; which will be confined to this world, or extended to the next, as the case requires. For *receiving unworthily* may, according to the kind and degree of it, be either a very great sin, or comparatively a small one. But all dangerous kinds and degrees may with ease be avoided, if we only take care to come to the sacrament with proper dispositions, and, which will follow of course, to behave at it in a proper manner.

To these dispositions our catechism proceeds. But more is needful to be known concerning them than can well be laid before you now. Therefore I shall conclude at present with desiring you to observe, that no unworthiness, but our own, can possibly endanger us, or prevent our receiving benefit. Doubtless it would both be more pleasing and more edifying, to come to *the table of the Lord*§ in company with such only as are qualified for a place at it: and they, who are unqualified, ought, when they properly can, to be restrained from it. But we have neither direction nor permission to stay away, because others come who should not: nor can they ever be so effectually excluded, but that *tares* will be mixed *among the wheat*: and attempting to *root them up* may often be more hurtful than *letting both grow together till the harvest*.

* Ign. ad Eph. c. 20. See Waterland on the Eucharist, p. 217.

† 1 Cor. xi. 27. ‡ 1 Cor. xi. 29. § 1 Cor. x. 21.

*vest**. Nay, should even *the stewards* and dispensers *of God's mysteries*† be unholy persons, though it be a grievous temptation to others to *abhor the Offering of the Lord*‡, yet that is holy still. *They shall bear their iniquity*; but notwithstanding, *all the promises* of all God's ordinances *are yea and amen*, sure and certain, *in Jesus Christ* §, to as many as *worship him in spirit and in truth* ‖.

* Matth. xiii. 28,—31. † 1 Cor. iv. 2. ‡ 1 Sam. ii. 17.
§ 2 Cor. i. 10. ‖ John iv. 23.

LECTURE XXXVIII.

Of the LORD'S SUPPER.

PART III.

WHAT qualifications and dispositions are *required* of them who come to the Lord's Supper, the scripture hath not particularly expressed: for they are easily collected from the nature of this ordinance. But our catechism, in its fifth and last answer concerning it, hath reduced them very justly to three; Repentance, faith, and charity.

I. *That we repent us truly of our former sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new life.* For as we are by nature prone to sin; and the youngest and best among us have in more instances than a few been guilty of it: the less the better: so in Christianity, repentance is the foundation of every thing. Now the sorrow that we ought to feel for the least sin, must be a very serious one: and for greater offences in proportion deeper. But the vehemence and passionateness of grief will, on every occasion, and particularly on this, be extremely different in different persons. And therefore all that God expects,

pects) is a ſincere, though it may be a calm, concern, for every paſt fault, of which we are conſcious, and for the multitudes, which we have either not obſerved or forgotten. And this concern muſt proceed from a ſenſe of duty, and produce the good effects of an humble confeſſion to him in all caſes, and to our fellow-creatures, in all caſes needful; of reſtitution for the injuries that we have done, ſo far as it is poſſible; and of a ſettled reſolution to amend our hearts and lives, wherever it is wanting. More than this we cannot do; and leſs than this God cannot accept. For it would be giving us a licenſe to diſobey him, if he allowed us to come to his table, and profeſs to *have fellowſhip with him*, while we *walked in darkneſs* *. Mere infirmities indeed, and undeſigned frailties, provided we ſtrive againſt them with any good degree of honeſt care, and humble ourſelves in the Divine preſence for them, ſo far as we are ſenſible of them, will not provoke God to reject us, as unworthy receivers, though, in ſtrictneſs, we are all unworthy. For if ſuch failures as theſe made perſons unfit, nobody could be fit. And therefore there will be no excuſe for omitting what Chriſt hath commanded: nor can be any reaſon why we ſhould not do it with comfort.

But whoever lives in any wilful ſin, cannot ſafely come to the holy ſacrament: nor, which I beg you to obſerve, can he ſafely ſtay away. For, as the hypocriſy of profeſſing amendment falſely at God's table is a great ſin; ſo the profaneneſs of turning our backs upon it, becauſe we will not amend, is to the full as great a one: and it is the moſt folly in the world to chuſe either, as the ſafer way: for a wicked perſon can be ſafe no way. But let him reſolve to quit his wickedneſs: and when he is thoroughly ſure, ſo far as he can judge from a competent experience, that he hath reſolved upon it effectually, then he may as ſafely receive as he can ſay his prayers. And ſuch a one ſhould come, not with ſervile fear, as to a hard maſter; but with willing duty, as to a merciful Father. Nay, ſhould he afterwards break his reſolutions, tho' doubtleſs it would be the juſteſt cauſe of heavy grief, yet it would not prove that he received unworthily, but only that he hath behaved unworthily ſince he received. And the thing for him to do is, to lament his fault with deeper contrition,

renew

* John i. 6.

renew his good purpoſes more firmly, pray for help from above with more earneſtneſs, watch over himſelf with more prudent care: then go again to God's altar, thankfully commemorate his pardoning love, and claim anew the benefit of his gracious covenant. Following this courſe honeſtly, he will aſſuredly gain ground. And therefore ſuch, as do not gain ground, do not follow it honeſtly: but allow themſelves to go round in a circle of ſinning, then repenting as they call it, and communicating, then ſinning again; as if every communion did of courſe wipe off the old ſcore, and ſo they might begin a new one without ſcruple; which is the abſurdeſt, the moſt irreligious, the moſt fatal imagination that can be.

II. The next thing, required of them who come to the Lord's Supper, is *a lively faith in God's mercy through Chriſt, with a thankful remembrance of his death.* And the faith neceſſary is a ſettled perſuaſion, that, for the ſake of the meritorious obedience and ſufferings of our bleſſed Redeemer, God will pardon true penitents; together with a comfortable truſt that we, as ſuch, have an intereſt in his merits. But here again you muſt obſerve, that different perſons may have very different degrees of this perſuaſion and truſt. Some may be *weak in faith* *; may have cauſe to ſay with in the goſpel of St Mark, *Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief* †; and yet their prayers, like his, may be graciouſly heard. Others may be *ſtrong* ‡, and *increaſe* §, till they *aboynd in faith* ‖. And ſuch have great reaſon to be thankful to God for themſelves; but ſurely they ought not to judge hardly of their brethren, who have not advanced ſo far. The rule of judging, both in the catechiſm and the ſcripture, is not by the poſitiveneſs, but the liveline ſs, of our faith: that is, the fruits of a Chriſtian life, which it produces: for *faith without works is dead* ¶. If we cannot ſhow the evidence of theſe, the higheſt confidence will do us no good; and if we can, we need have no doubts concerning our ſpiritual condition; and though we have ever ſo many, provided we perceive no ſufficient reaſon for them, we may celebrate this holy ordinance very ſafely. For ſuch weakneſſes in our natural temper and ſpirits are no way inconſiſtent with having,

* Rom. xiv. 1. † Mark ix. 24. ‡ Rom. iv. 20. § Luke xvii. 5.
‖ Col. ii. 7. ¶ James ii. 17.

having, in our fixed and deliberate judgment, that *full truſt in God's mercy*, which the Communion-ſervice requires; and we cannot take a more likely method, either to perfect our repentance or to ſtrengthen our faith, than receiving the ſacrament frequently.

Our catechiſm teaches further, that our faith in Chriſt muſt be accompanied *with a thankful remembrance of his death*. And ſurely, if we believe, that he died to ſave us, we muſt be thankful for it. But then the meaſure of our thankfulneſs muſt be taken from the goodneſs and conſtancy of its effects, not from that ſenſible warmth and fervency, which we cannot, ordinarily ſpeaking, feel ſo ſtrongly in ſpiritual things as in temporal; and of which bad perſons may at times have very much, and good perſons little. For that is the true thankfulneſs, which produces love. And *this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments* *.

But there is one commandment, as I have ſhewn you, peculiarly connected with this ordinance. And therefore our catechiſm ſpecifies it ſeparately, and in expreſs terms, by requiring,

III. That we *be in charity with all men*. For we can have no ſhare in the love of our Creator, our Redeemer, and Sanctifier, unleſs, in imitation of it, we love one another; and, as the goodneſs of God is univerſal, ſo muſt ours be too. Receiving the holy communion was indeed intended to increaſe the degree of it; but the reality we muſt have, before we are worthy to receive. And we muſt ſhow it is real, by *forgiving them who treſpaſs againſt us*: by aſſiſting, as far as can be reaſonably expected, thoſe who need aſſiſtance in any kind; by our hearty prayers for thoſe, whom we can help no other way; by faithfully performing the duties of our ſeveral ſtations and relations in life; and by condeſcenſion, mildneſs, and humanity towards every perſon, as occaſion offers: all which duties, and particularly that of forgiveneſs, have been explained to you in their proper places.

Theſe then being the diſpoſitions requiſite for receiving the holy ſacrament, as indeed they are for obtaining eternal happineſs; we are all greatly concerned to examine ourſelves, whether we have them or not; and ſhould have been concern-

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* 1 John v. 3.

ed to do it, though this ordinance had never been appointed. But we are now more especially bound to it with a view to this ordinance; both from the nature of it, and from St Paul's positive injunction: *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup* *.

The principal subjects of our examination are comprehended under the three heads just now mentioned. But as to any particular method to be taken, or time to be spent in it, or in any further preparation subsequent to it, we have no command: it is left to every one's prudence and voluntary piety. They who live in a constant practice of religion and virtue, are always fit for the sacrament; and may, if the call be sudden, by reflecting for a few moments, sufficiently know that they are fit. Persons who live in any sin, may as quickly know that they are not. And it is only in doubtful cases, that any length of consideration is necessary to satisfy us about this matter. But it must be extremely useful for all persons, not only to be attentive to their ways constantly, but to look back upon them frequently; much more frequently, than almost any one receives the sacrament. And as things, which have no certain season fixed for them, are very apt to be neglected; we should fix upon this, as one certain season for so particular an inspection into the state of our hearts and lives as we can well make, and can hope to be the better for, joining with it suitable meditations, resolutions, and devotions. But then in the whole of this work we must be careful, neither to hurry over any part thoughtlessly, nor lengthen it wearisomely. And in our examination we must be especially careful, neither to flatter nor yet to affright ourselves; but observe impartially what is right in us, thank God, and take the comfort of it: acknowledge what is wrong, beg pardon, and amend it. For without amendment, being ever so sorry will avail nothing.

The last thing to be mentioned in relation to this holy sacrament, is our behaviour at it, which ought to be very serious and reverent; such as may show, in the properest manner, that, to use the apostle's words, we *discern* or distinguish *the Lord's body* †; look on the action of receiving it, as one of

* 1 Cor. xi. 28. † 1 Cor. xi. 29.

of no common nature, but as the religious memorial of our blessed Saviour's dying for us, and by his death establishing with us a covenant of pardon, grace, and everlasting felicity, on God's part; and of faith and holiness, on ours. With this important consideration, we should endeavour to affect our hearts deeply and tenderly; yet neither to force our minds, if we could, into immoderate transports, by which we shall only bewilder and lose, instead of benefiting, ourselves; nor express even what we ought to feel, by any improper singularities of gesture; not yet be dejected, if we have less feeling, and even less attention to the service, than we have reason to wish. For such things may be, in a great measure at least, natural and unavoidable. Or, supposing them faults; they may be, and often are, the faults of such persons, as, notwithstanding, are, on the whole, very worthy communicants. They may be, for a time, useful means of keeping us humble and watchful; after that, God may deliver us from them; and should we continue all our lives afflicted with them, it would never hinder our receiving all the necessary benefits of this ordinance.

God grant that both it, and all his other gracious institutions, may contribute effectually to *build us up on our most holy faith* in a suitable practice, that so we may ever *keep ourselves in the love of God*; and on good grounds *look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life* *.

* Jude, ver. 20, 21.

LECTURE XXXIX.

The Conclusion.

HAVING now, through God's mercy, carried on these lectures to the end of the catechism, and in some measure explained to you every part of Christian faith and duty compre-

comprehended in it, I have only one inſtruction more to add, but the moſt important of all for you to remember and conſider well: that, *if ye know theſe things, happy are ye, if ye do them* *; and miſerable are ye, if ye do them not.

We all know indeed by nature, in a great degree, what manner of perſons we ought to be in this world: and therefore, if we fail of being ſuch, are in a great degree inexcuſable. For how little teaching ſoever ſome may have had; yet our Saviour's home queſtion will reach even them: *Yea, and why even of yourſelves judge ye not, what is right*†? *The work of the law is written in the hearts* of men, *their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs* ‡. Being reaſonable creatures, we are evidently bound to govern our paſſions, appetites, fancies, and whole behaviour, by the rules of reaſon. And who doth not ſee, that ſobriety, temperance, and modeſty, are things perfectly reaſonable; and exceſs, and diſſoluteneſs, and indecency, miſchievous and ſhameful? Being ſocial creatures, we are as evidently bound to whatever will make ſociety happy. And ſince we are very ſenſible, that others ought to treat us with juſtice and kindneſs, peaceably mind their own buſineſs, and diligently provide for their own maintenance; we cannot but be ſenſible, that we ought to do the ſame things. Then, laſtly, being creatures capable of knowing our Creator, who is *not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being* §: it follows very clearly, that we are not to forget him, but worſhip and obey him as the Almighty, all-wiſe, and all good Maker and Lord of the univerſe; acknowledge our dependance on him, be thankful to him for his mercies, and reſign ourſelves to his diſpoſal.

Thus much, one ſhould have thought, all men muſt have known, without ſupernatural teaching; and certainly they might; and therefore are juſtly blameable and puniſhable, if they do not. But ſtill it hath appeared in fact, that wherever men have been left to their own reaſon, neither every one hath taught himſelf, nor the wiſer part of the world taught the reſt, even theſe plain things; ſo as to produce any ſteady regard to them, as duties, or even any ſettled conviction of them, as truths. And for want of it, ſin and miſery have prevailed every where. Men have made others and themſelves wretched

* John, xiii. 17. † Luke xii. 57. ‡ Rom. ii. 15. § Acts xvii. 27, 28.

ed in numberleſs ways; and often doubly wretched by the reflections of their own hearts; knowing they had done ill, and not knowing how to be ſure of pardon.

Foreſeeing from eternity theſe dreadful conſequences of human ignorance and wickedneſs, God provided ſuitable remedies of inſtruction and grace; which he notified to the world from time to time, as his own unſearchable wiſdom ſaw would be fitteſt; increaſing the light gradually till it ſhone out in the full day of Chriſtianity. But revelation, as well as reaſon, hath been given in vain to a great part of mankind. The propagation of it thro' the earth hath been ſtrangely neglected; in many places, where it hath been received it hath been loſt again; and in too many, where it is retained, it is grievouſly corrupted and obſcured. Without queſtion we ought to judge as charitably as we can of all who are in any of theſe conditions: but at the ſame time we ought, from the bottom of our hearts, to thank God that none of them is our own. Undoubtedly he is and will be gracious to all his creatures, as far as they are fit objects; but it is *the riches of his grace* *, that he hath beſtowed on us; and as, with juſtice, he might diſpoſe of his own free gifts as he pleaſed; ſo, in mercy, he hath conferred a large proportion of them on this nation and age. Bleſſings, that are common and familiar, tho' indeed much the greater for that, are uſually but little regarded. And thus, amongſt other things, the opportunities that we enjoy of religious knowledge, it may be feared, are often very lightly eſteemed. But would we reflect, how much leſs means of being acquainted with the duties of this life, and the rewards of another, not only the unenlightened heathen world, but the Jews, the people of God, had formerly; and much the greateſt part even of Chriſtians have had for numbers of ſucceſſive generations, and have ſtill, than we: it would make us feel, that our Saviour's words belong to us alſo; *Verily, I ſay unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have deſired to ſee thoſe things which ye ſee, and have not ſeen them: and to hear thoſe things which ye hear, and have not heard them. But bleſſed are your eyes, for they ſee; and your ears, for they hear* †.

But then, and, for the ſake of God and our ſouls, let us obſerve it; if *ſeeing we ſee not, and hearing we hear not* ‡, to the

* Eph. i. 7. ii. 7. † Matth. xiii. 16, 17. ‡ Matth. xiii. 13.

only good purpoſe of life, that of becoming in heart and in practice ſuch as we ought; *better had it been for us, not to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than, after we have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto us* *. *For unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall much be required. The ſervant that knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes: he that knew it not, with few* †. But take notice; he that, in compariſon with others, may be ſaid not to know the will of God, knows enough of it to ſubject him, if he fails of doing it, to future puniſhment; *to be beaten with ſtripes.* Not even a heathen ſinner therefore ſhall eſcape entirely by his ignorance; much leſs will that plea excuſe a Chriſtian; but leaſt of all can thoſe Chriſtians hope for mercy, who hear the word of God preached to them weekly; have it in their hands, and may read it daily; and yet tranſgreſs it. *Verily I ſay unto you, it ſhall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha, in the day of judgement* ‡, than for ſuch perſons.

Let no one argue from hence, that knowledge then is no bleſſing. For the more we know of our Maker and our duty, the better we are qualified to be good in this world and happy in the next. And we can never be worſe for it, unleſs he will, by making either no uſe or a bad uſe of it. Nor let any one imagine, that, though we need not be the worſe for our knowledge, yet ſince we may, ignorance is the ſafer choice; as what will excuſe our ſins, if not entirely, yet in a great meaſure. But let us all remember, it is not pretended, but real ignorance; nor even that, unleſs we could not help it, that will be any plea in our favour. Wilful, or even careleſs ignorance, is a great ſin itſelf; and therefore can never procure us pardon for the other ſins which it may occaſion. What ſhould any one of us think of a ſervant who kept out of the way of receiving his maſter's orders, purpoſely becauſe he had no mind to do them? Nay, ſuppoſing him only through negligence not to underſtand the buſineſs that he was required to learn and follow; would this juſtify him? Would it not be ſaid, that what he might and ought to have known, it was his own fault if he did not know? And what do we think of God,

if

* 2 Pet. ii. 21. † Luke xii. 47, 48. ‡ Mark vi. 11.

if we hope to impoſe upon him with pleas that will not paſs amongſt ourſelves?

Fix in your hearts then, the firſt indiſpenſable duty of man is, to learn the will of his Maker; the next, to do it: and nothing can excuſe you from either. Attend therefore diligently on all ſuch means of inſtruction, as God's providence gives you: eſpecially the public inſtruction of the church, which, having expreſsly appointed for you, he will aſſuredly bleſs to you; provided you obſerve our Saviour's moſt important direction, *Take heed how ye hear* *. For on that depends, whether the preaching of the goſpel ſhall be *life or death to you* †. One it muſt be: and theſe very lectures, amongſt other things, which have been truly intended for your eternal good, will prove, if you apply them not to that end, what God forbid they ſhould, a means of increaſing your future condemnation. Be intreated therefore to conſider very ſeriouſly what you are taught; for be there ever ſo much of the weakneſs of man in it, there is the power of God unto ſalvation, unleſs you hinder it yourſelves. Never deſpiſe then the meaneſt of your inſtructors; and never think of admiring the ableſt: but remember that your buſineſs is, neither to applaud nor cenſure other perſons performances; but to improve your own hearts, and mend your own lives. Barely coming and hearing is nothing. Barely being pleaſed and moved and affected is nothing. It is only minding and doing the whole of your duty, not ſome part of it alone, that is any thing.

Knowing the words of your catechiſm is of no other uſe, than to preſerve in your memories the things which thoſe words expreſs. Knowing the meaning of your catechiſm ever ſo well, in every part, is of no other uſe than to put you on the performance of what it teaches. And performing ſome things ever ſo conſtantly or zealouſly, will not avail, without a faithful endeavour to perform every thing. Have it always in your thoughts therefore, that practice, uniform practice, is the one thing needful. Your knowledge may be very low and imperfect, your faith not very clear and diſtinct: but however poorly you are capable of furniſhing your heads; if your hearts and lives be good, all is well.

But here, I pray you, obſerve further, that as it is not in underſtand-

* Luke viii. 18. † 2 Cor. ii. 16.

underſtanding and believing, ſo it is in devotion merely, that religion conſiſts. The common duties of common life make far the greateſt part of what our Maker expects of us. To be honeſt and ſober, and modeſt and humble, and good tempered and mild, and induſtrious and uſeful in our ſeveral ſtations, are things to which all perſons are as much bound as they can be to any thing: and when they proceed from a principle of conſcience towards God, and are offered up to him, as our bounden duty, through Jeſus Chriſt, are as true and acceptable a ſervice to him, as either our attendance at church, or our prayers in retirement at home. And they, who ſhound in theſe latter duties, and neglect any of the former, only diſgrace religion, and deceive themſelves.

Yet underſtand me not, I beg you, to ſpeak ſlightly of devotion, either private or public. On the contrary, I recommend both to you moſt earneſtly: for our immediate duty to God is the higheſt of all duties, *the firſt and great commandment* * of natural religion: and the payment of due and diſtinct regards to the Father Almighty, to his bleſſed Son, and Holy Spirit, of courſe obtains an equal rank in revelation. In particular I recommend it to you, not to omit coming to evening prayers, becauſe now theſe lectures will be diſcontinued. Joining in God's worſhip, and hearing his holy word read to you, is always a ſufficient, and ſhould always be the principal motive to bring you. For *neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increaſe* †. And we may be ſure he will give it to thoſe, who attend on his ordinances with pious minds: and we may juſtly expect, that he will withhold it from thoſe, who, inſtead of coming becauſe it is their duty, come to hear this or that man diſcourſe.

But then I muſt beſeech you to obſerve, at the ſame time, that as neither piety without morals, nor morals without piety, nor heathen piety without Chriſtian, will ſuffice; ſo neither will the outward acts of any thing, without an inward principle of it; and the true principle is a reverent eſteem and love of God. Other inducements may allowably be joined with this; but if this be not alſo joined with them, what we do may be prudence, may be virtue, but is not religion; and therefore,

* Matth. xxii. 38. † 1 Cor. iii. 7.

therefore, however right, ſo far as it goes, doth not go far enough to entitle us to reward, or even to ſecure us from puniſhment; which nothing can more juſtly deſerve, than to have little or no ſenſe of filial affection to our heavenly Father, and of thankful love to our crucified Redeemer and gracious Sanctifier, who have the higheſt right to the utmoſt regard that our ſouls are capable of feeling.

You muſt reſolve therefore, not only to be Chriſtians externally in your lives, but internally in your hearts. And, let me remind you further, you will reſolve on neither to good purpoſe, if you truſt to yourſelves alone for the performance. You will contrive, perhaps, great ſchemes of amendment and goodneſs, but you will execute very little of them; or you will do a good deal, it may be, in ſome particulars, and leave others, equally neceſſary, undone: or you will go on a while, and then fall, when you thought you were ſureſt of ſtanding: or, what ſeeming progreſs ſoever you may make, you will ruin it all, by thinking too highly of yourſelves for it: or ſome way or another you will certainly fail, unleſs the grace of God enable you, firſt to be deeply ſenſible of your own guilt and weakneſs; then to lay hold, by faith in Chriſt, on his promiſed mercy and help; in the ſtrength of that help to obey his commands; and, after all, to know that you are ſtill *unprofitable ſervants**. Now this grace you may certainly have, in whatever meaſure you want it, by earneſt prayer for it, humble dependance upon it, and ſuch honeſt and diligent uſe of the lower degrees of it, as he hath promiſed to reward with higher degrees; and you can have it no other way. If ever therefore, when we exhort you to duties, moral or religious, we omit to mention the great duty of applying for more ſtrength from above to be given you, not for your own ſakes, but that of your bleſſed Redeemer, in order to practiſe them, it is by no means becauſe we think ſuch application unneceſſary; but becauſe we hope you know it ſo well to be abſolutely neceſſary, that we need not always remind you of it. But if we are, at any time, wanting to you in this reſpect or any other, be not therefore wanting to yourſelves, but *work out your own ſalvation* from this motive, which alone will procure you ſucceſs,

* Luke xvii. 10.

ceſs, that *God worketh in you both to will and to do**. *And I pray God to ſanctify you wholly, and preſerve your whole ſpirit, ſoul, and body blameleſs, unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* †.

Having ſaid thus much for you all in general, I deſire you, children, to take notice of what I am going to ſay, in the laſt place, to you in particular. Your condition is of the lowest kind; but your inſtruction hath been better than many of your ſuperiors have had. If therefore your behaviour be bad, your condemnation will be heavy; and if it be good, you may be to the full as happy in this world and the next, as if you were of ever ſo high rank. For true happineſs comes only from doing our duty, and none will ever come from tranſgreſſing it; but, whatever pleaſure or profit ſin may promiſe, they will ſoon turn into pain and loſs. Remember therefore, as long as you live, what you have been taught here. Remember particularly the anſwers to thoſe two main queſtions: *What is thy duty towards God?* and, *what is thy duty towards thy neighbour?* And be aſſured, that unleſs you practiſe both, when you go hence to ſervices and apprenticeſhips, all the money and labour, that hath been ſpent on you, will be ſpent in vain; you will be a diſgrace to the education and teaching that you have had; you will probably be very miſerable here, and certainly ſo for ever hereafter. But, if you practiſe both, you will make an honeſt and grateful return for the kindneſs that you have received from your benefactors; which I hope you will never forget, but imitate, if God enables you to do it; you will be loved of your Maker and fellow-creatures; you will live in peace of mind, you will die with comfort, and be received into everlaſting bliſs.

Think then, I entreat and charge you, ſeriouſly and often of theſe things. And, to remind yourſelves of them more effectually, be diligent in reading ſuch good books as are given you at your leaving ſchool, or otherwiſe put into your hands; be conſtant in coming to church, on the Lord's day at leaſt: ſuch of you as go away before you are confirmed, take the firſt opportunity, after you are fourteen, to apply to your miniſter, wherever you are, that you may be well inſtructed for

* Phil ii. 12, 13. † 1 Theſſ. v. 23.

for that holy ordinance, and then admitted to it. Within a reaſonable time after this, prepare yourſelves, and deſire him and your friends to aſſiſt in preparing you to receive the Lord's Supper: concerning which you have heard very lately, how expreſsly it is required of all Chriſtians, (a name that comprehends young as well as old) for the means of improving them in every thing that is good. And may God give his grace to you and to us all, that by the help of thoſe means, with which he hath ſo plentifully favoured us, we may each of us improve daily in the knowledge of his truth, and the love of our duty, *till at length we come unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt* *.

* Eph iv. 13.

AN

ANSWER

TO

DR MAYHEW's OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

CHARTER AND CONDUCT

OF THE

SOCIETY

FOR THE

PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS.

DR MAYHEW's * book is written, partly againſt the Church of England in general; partly againſt the conduct of the Society for the Propagation of the Goſpel, in ſettling miniſters of that church in the Maſſachuſetts and Connecticut; partly againſt appointing biſhops to reſide in his Majeſty's American Colonies. The firſt, though not formally propoſed by him as one head of his work, appears to be in his view throughout the whole of it. And if ſatisfaction be previouſly

* The quotations out of Dr Mayhew's obſervations are taken from the Engliſh edition, which contains 147 pages. The American hath 176 pages.

viouſly given to candid perſons on this point, they will be better prepared for conſidering the other two.

He objects againſt the Conſtitution and Worſhip of the Church of England, as unſcriptural *. Now, even had he attempted to bring proof of this, it would only lead into a long diſpute, very little connected with his profeſſed ſubject, and *into which*, he declares, *it was by no means his deſign to enter* †. But, inſtead of proofs, he contents himſelf with bold aſſertions, reproachful names, and ludicrous repreſentations; a likely method indeed to pleaſe the prejudiced, and carry the thoughtleſs along with him, but not to perſuade the conſiderate and judicious. Whatever the Doctor may think of our church, it hath ever been highly honoured by foreign proteſtants. The Lutherans prefer it to the Calviniſt communion, the Calviniſts to the Lutheran, the Greeks to both: which may ſufficiently juſtify the expreſſion, underſtood in a latitude not uncommon, that all other perſuaſions eſteem it next to their own ‡. And further, moſt, if not all of them, blame the Engliſh Diſſenters for ſeparating from it. The Doctor ſeems to entertain the worſe opinion of it, becauſe the members of the Church of Rome likewiſe eſteem it more than they do others §. But we have to reply, that they hate it more alſo, as the moſt dangerous enemy to their cauſe, and ſtrongeſt bulwark of the Reformation. If there be ſome appointments in it, which the ſcripture doth not require; ſo have their been from the firſt in the Church of New England too, as may be ſeen in the appendix to the hiſtory of that country, written by Mr Neale, a diſſenting miniſter: and ſo there are in all the churches of the world. Ours hath not many things of this kind, nor lays great ſtreſs upon them: and to think indifferent things unlawful, is as unreaſonable and ſuperſtitious, as to think them neceſſary.

He ſpeaks with horror of its *enormous hierarchy, aſcending by various gradations from the dirt to the ſkies* ‖: *and reſembling that of the* Romiſh Church, *in which one great Prelate preſides over the whole* ¶. What he means by the former words, beſides indeterminate abuſe, perhaps he could not eaſily explain. That there are different ranks of men in civil

* Page 128. † Page 126. ‡ Ibid. § Page 127. ‖ Page 128 ¶ Page 67.

government, was never held to be an objection againſt it: and where is the harm of it in eccleſiaſtical? In the Preſbyterian hierarchy, one is raiſed conſiderably above another, though the preference uſually may be temporary: and their acts of power have been as enormous, as thoſe of the Engliſh biſhops formerly; and are much greater than thoſe of the Engliſh biſhops now. In his favourite compariſon of our church to the Romiſh, the Doctor quite miſtakes the matter. Not one, but two Prelates, preſide over the Church of England; and four over her ſiſter church of Ireland; which grievouſly ſpoils the ſimili-tude, that he would make out. And all theſe *preſide in ſubordination to the king*, as he well knows; though he diſingenuouſly hints a doubt of it by his ironical words, *I hope**; at the ſame time that, I believe, he would deny it to be in ſubordination to the king, that he preſides over *the Weſt Church in* Boſton. As to *the dirt*, which he mentions; If ſome clergymen of our church are very low in the world, ſo are ſome of every church; nor do they deſerve ſcorn for it, but compaſſion. And that any of ours are ſo high, as to do harm, or cauſe fear, by their elevation, the perſons, amongſt whom they live, find not: and he, who is placed ſo remote from them, had better judge by the experience of others, than by his own heated imagination.

Biſhops, in his language, are *the mitred lordly ſucceſſors of the fiſhermen of Galilee* †. Now if mitres offend him, our biſhops wear none. If they are ſtiled lords, it is becauſe, by the ancient conſtitution of our country, they ſit in the upper houſe of parliament: where, I believe, they are thought as uſeful members as the reſt. And I know not, whether the Doctor's modeſty would propoſe that our conſtitution ſhould be altered in this reſpect, or whether a much wiſer man could foreſee the conſequences of ſuch an alteration. Men may be lords, without being lordly: and they, who have profeſſed to abhor the name, have carried the diſpoſition of domineering to the height; and lorded it over the conſciences and the liberties of others, as much as any who have worn higher titles. What intimation lies concealed under the terms, *Fiſhermen of Galilee*; and whether, in the Doctor's opinion, all miniſters of Chriſt are to follow ſome trade, he hath not explained, nor told

* Page 64. † Page 128.

told us what his own is. But certainly reviling his brethren is a very bad one.

He alſo charges the Church of England with perſecution; and particularly with driving out the anceſtors of the preſent inhabitants of New England into that country *. Now it is a matter of notoriety, that the lawfulneſs of perſecution is no doctrine of our church: and there are few of its members, if any, now, who approve it, or do not deteſt it. But we muſt acknowledge, that, when the errors of the Church of Rome were caſt off, this was not immediately perceived to be one by almoſt any of the Proteſtant communions. The Church of England was but like others; and the Diſſenters from it had not the leaſt degree more of a tolerating ſpirit, perhaps not ſo much. There were amongſt them peaceable men, and ſo there were amongſt us. But in general their avowed aim was, not exemption for themſelves, but the deſtruction of the eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment †. On this they were treated too ſeverely, and they returned the treatment to the full, as ſoon as they were able, in the total overthrow of church and ſtate. Far from exaggerating, I chuſe not to mention the particulars of their behaviour. Every good man muſt lament the faults of both ſides; but to inveigh againſt one with bitterneſs, and leave it to be imagined that the other was innocent, which the Doctor doth, I hope he will ſee on recollection is extremely unjuſt.

In the *platform of diſcipline, agreed upon in the Synod of* Cambridge, in New England in 1648, and publiſhed by Mr Neale, in his hiſtory of that country, it is declared, that *hereſy is to be reſtrained and puniſhed by the civil magiſtrate;* and that *if any churches grow ſchiſmatical, or walk contrary to the rule of the word, he is to put forth his coercive power, as the matter ſhall require* ‡. Accordingly, Mr Neale himſelf very honeſtly confeſſes, that the Churches of New England, *were formerly very uncharitable to thoſe who differed from them, and had no notions of liberty of conſcience, but were for forcing men to their public aſſemblies by fines and impriſonments* §. On their putting to death ſeveral Quakers, as they did before and after

* Page 129. † See this fully proved in Maddox's vindication of the Church of England. ‡ Vol. 2. p 306. § Vol. 2. 248, 249.

ter the Reſtoration, till an order from King Charles the Second prohibited them *, he hath theſe words; *Now it appeared, that the* New England *Puritans were no better friends to liberty of conſcience, than their adverſaries; and that the queſtion between them was not, whether one party of Chriſtians ſhould oppreſs another, but who ſhould have that power* †. Nay, the Quakers affirm, that *they who had loudly cried out of the tyranny and oppreſſion of the Biſhops in* Old England, *from whom they fled, when ſettled in a place, where they had liberty to govern, made their little finger of cruelty bigger, than ever they found the loins of the Biſhops* ‡. Dr Mayhew indeed ſaith, that *ſeverities were uſed againſt the Quakers, much leſs under the notion of their being diſſenters from the* public *mode of worſhip, than of their being diſturbers of the peace and religious aſſemblies* §. But ſtill ſeverities were uſed againſt them on the former account; and they juſtly obſerve in Mr Neale, that offences of the latter kind *have never been thought worthy of death by any civilized nation* ‖. But the Doctor aſks, ſuppoſing the New Englanders to have perſecuted the Quakers, *From whom did they learn this practice? Epiſcopalians certainly ſhould lay their hands upon their mouths* ¶. Now the plain truth is, that all Proteſtants learnt this practice from the Church of Rome, and all ſhould lay their hands upon their mouths. But the Doctor hath no right to open his as wide as he pleaſes, and require us to ſhut ours.

God be thanked, the members of our church are grown wiſer and milder; the Diſſenters in general, I am fully perſuaded, are ſo too; and it is high time, that ſuch of both parties, as are not, ſhould. But performances, like the Doctor's, cannot ſurely contribute to this good end amongſt either. He aſſures us indeed at the beginning, that he hath a *regard to truth and juſtice*, with an *averſion to controverſy* *; and at the end, that *he honours candid and moderate men of all denominations, and would not unneceſſarily give offence to any perſon of the Epiſcopal perſuaſion* ‡. One muſt ſuppoſe, that he believes himſelf; and, as far as is poſſible, I would believe him alſo.

Some

* Vol. 1. page 334. † Vol. 1. page 329.

‡ Grove's preface to Biſhop's New England judged. § Page 79

‖ Vol. 1, p. 331, 332, ¶ Page 80, * Page 7, ‡ Page 145,

Some perſons are ſtrangely ſubject to ſudden guſts of paſſion, and ſay and do things in them, for which they are heartily ſorry the next hour. But were this the Doctor's caſe in writing, he would blot out the injurious expreſſions which had dropt from his pen. Therefore his malady hath a deeper root in his frame, and influences him more conſtantly, though it may be without his perceiving it. For I am exceedingly unwilling to think, that he inſerts his qualifying and healing clauſes with an artful deſign to procure himſelf a diſpenſation for his outrages. However that be, his profeſſions, that he doth not intend to do what he hath been doing juſt before, and doth again ſoon after with all his might, are proteſtations againſt fact, which cannot be admitted.

But whatever conceſſions a gentleman of this turn makes to his adverſaries, are to be received with great regard, for one may be ſure they are not too large. Let us therefore begin with theſe, in conſidering his remarks on the charter and conduct of the ſociety.

He owns, that *it hath a right to plant churches, to ſupport miſſions and ſchools*, &c. *in many of the* Britiſh American *Colonies*; and adds, that *no one, who hath ever read the charter, can poſſibly imagine, that its care and charity ought to be confined to the heathen ſlaves in, or the ſavages bordering on, the plantations* *. Yet many have been led both to imagine and to aſſert this, merely from its name. It is hoped, that for the future they will confeſs and remember their miſtake. He owns likewiſe, that in three diſtricts of New England, i. e. New Hampſhire, Rhode-Iſland, and Providence, *much leſs care hath been taken for the ſupport of a public worſhip*, than in the reſt †: and that *a few miſſions* from the ſociety *might be needed* in theſe, *particularly in Rhode-Iſland* ‡. And he blames them as unneceſſary, only in *the Maſſachuſetts and Connecticut*. Nay, he declares, that in theſe *it is by no means his intention to charge that venerable body with any wilful known miſconduct, or improper application of monies, even though any incautious expreſſion ſhould at firſt view have the appearance of ſuch an accuſation* §. Again he ſaith, *I would by no means be underſtood, as charging ſo reſpectable a body with any wilful criminal abuſe of power:*

* Page 12, 13 † Page 36 ‡ Page 46 § Page 7

power *: Accordingly, after declaring *his design to show, that they have in some respects counteracted the ends of their institution*, he adds, *however contrary to their intention* †. He hath also these express words: *That the society have chiefly sent their missionaries into those* British *plantations, where they were much needed, according to the true design of their institution; and that they have hereby served the interest of religion in them, is by no means denied: it were very criminal to deny them the praise, that is justly due to them in this respect.* I honour the Doctor for these instances of candor; and if he had preserved the same temper throughout, should either have had no controversy with him, or have engaged in the friendly debate with pleasure; whereas now the frequent and copious effusions of a bad spirit in his work make such animadversions upon him unavoidable, as I should otherwise gladly have spared.

His charge on the society is, that they have *maintained Episcopal Churches, where other Protestant Churches were before settled, and the administration of God's word and ordinances provided for* ‡, with a *formal design*, which *they have long had, to root out* Presbyterianism, *&c. in the Colonies.* Now this design, *in pursuance of which*, he saith, *they have in a great measure neglected the ends of their institution* §, is falsely ascribed to them. They have never formed a scheme *to root out* presbyterianism, *&c.* in the Colonies, either by force, which the Doctor could not mean, though the word most naturally suggests it, or even by argument and persuasion. Undoubtedly they would be very glad, if all the inhabitants were of the communion of the church of England: as undoubtedly the Doctor would, if they were all of his communion. But they have sent no persons to effect this. He attempts to prove the contrary from the following instruction, given by them to their missionaries: *That they frequently visit their respective parishioners; those of our own communion, to keep them steady in the profession and practice of religion, as taught in the Church of England; those that oppose us, or dissent from us, to convince and reclaim them with a spirit of meekness and gentleness* ‖. His words on that occasion are: *This clearly shows what they are after. It will also be observed here, that WE are considered as parishioners.*

* Page 93. † Page 9. ‡ Page 15. § Page 86.

‖ Collection of papers, printed by order of the society, page 9.

*pariſhioners of the miſſionaries, no leſs than profeſſed Epiſcopalians. And we are often ſpoken of as ſuch by them in their letters to the Society, as appears by the abſtracts. How aſſuming is this**! But ſurely it may be retorted, How unfair is this! The inſtruction plainly relates, not to miſſionaries ſettled in Preſbyterian or congregational pariſhes, for there were none ſo ſettled when it was drawn up, but for incumbents of Epiſcopal pariſhes, though with a mixture of diſſenters. And they would of courſe underſtand, that endeavouring to *convince and reclaim* the latter was not to be their ſtated and principal buſineſs, but occaſional only and incidental. If the Doctor ſhould happen to ſpeak of the Epiſcopalians reſiding in his pariſh, as part of his pariſhioners, and ſay, that he ſhould endeavour *to reclaim them with a ſpirit of meekneſs;* would this be a proof, that he was fixed there with a *formal deſign to root out Epiſcopacy* in it? If there be inſtances, in which miſſionaries, who have no legal pariſhes, have uſed the ſame language; (for he quotes none, and I remember none) it only follows that they have expreſſed themſelves improperly, and ſhould be ſet right when it is obſerved.

Another evidence produced by the Doctor is, that *in the account of the ſociety, publiſhed in* 1760, *after ſpeaking of the independent congregations in New England, they ſay:* "Several "other ways of diviſion and ſeparation did ſo much obtain in "other of our colonies and plantations, that this made it more "neceſſary to think of providing for a regular and orthodox "miniſtry,——to promote, as much as poſſible, an agreement "in faith and worſhip." *This,* he ſaith, *can mean nothing, more or leſs, than uniformity, or a general conformity to the doctrine, diſcipline, and worſhip of the Church of England* †. I have not been able to procure this account, or to learn by whom, or whoſe order, it was compiled. But the paſſage quoted from it, expreſsly ſpeaks, not of independent, or any congregations in New England, but of *other ways of diviſion and ſeparation in other Colonies,* and therefore is nothing to the Doctor's purpoſe: beſides that, *as much agreement as poſſible, in faith and worſhip* might be far *leſs than a general conformity to the Church of England;* which it might be impoſſible to obtain, and yet as near an approach to it as could be obtained,

* Page 89. † page 86, 87.

might, even in his opinion, be more deſirable, than letting them continue in their preſent way. For how bad that was, appears not.

The real conduct of the Society, with reſpect to provinces and pariſhes not Epiſcopal, hath been, to contribute towards ſupporting public worſhip and inſtruction amongſt ſuch members of the Church of England, as cannot in conſcience comply with the worſhip and inſtruction of the other congregations in their neighbourhood, and yet cannot wholly maintain miniſters for themſelves. The moſt of theſe will uſually be in the more conſiderable towns; and for that reaſon it is, and not with a view of making converts, as the Doctor pretends*, that epiſcopal miniſters are ſettled in ſo many conſiderable towns of New England. But they are ſettled no where, till a competent number of our people, inhabiting near, requeſt it, and ſubſcribe what they are able. Nay, theſe requeſts have often, both formerly † and lately, been rejected, or poſtponed or many years together, when the number did not appear to be ſufficient, or the Society apprehended, that too much of their money was going this way. And were it but known, as it ſeems to be in ſome meaſure to the Diſſenters themſelves ‡, how continual and importunate the calls and expoſtulations of ſuch perſons are, the impartial would wonder, how the Society could withſtand ſo many of them as it hath done. Theſe are plain evidences, that miſſionaries are not ſent to New England for the purpoſe of making proſelytes to Epiſcopacy. Accordingly, which is a further evidence, they have no directions, public or private, given them to make any, or to preach at all upon diſputable points: but on the contrary, one rule laid down for them is, *that they keep always in view the great deſign of their undertaking*; viz. *to promote the glory of God, and the ſalvation of men, by propagating the goſpel of our Lord and Saviour* §; and another is, *that the chief ſubject of their ſermons be the great fundamental principles of Chriſtianity; and the duties of a ſober, righteous and godly life, as reſulting from thoſe principles* ||.

Nor

* Page 46. † See Humphrey's hiſtorical account, p. 61, &c.

‡ See Mr Hobart's ſerious addreſs, page 133, 138.

§ Collection of papers, page 20. || Ibid page 23.

Nor can the miſſionaries eaſily miſapprehend the intentions of the Society, thus manifeſted. Several of them have indeed ſpoken highly, ſometimes perhaps, as it is but natural, too highly, of the increaſe of their churches; and have mentioned it with great pleaſure in their letters, and no wonder. But they have not aſcribed that increaſe to the pains which they have taken to bring perſons over to it, but rather to the ſatisfaction which our ſervice had given to perſons, who of their own accord, from curioſity or other motives, attended it. Or if they now and then do mention themſelves as making converts, they do not ever, to the beſt of my remembrance, mention this as the end for which they were appointed. Dr Johnſon, one of the oldeſt of them, profeſſes it not to be ſo, in theſe words: 'He [Mr Hobart] is much miſtaken in ſaying—we 'make it our chief and grand buſineſs to proſelyte Diſſenters 'to the Church of England.—Our chief buſineſs is, to mini-'ſter to thoſe who are church people; and if this proves the 'occaſion of increaſing the number, it is but what may natu-'rally be expected, when they, by that means, have opportu-'nity to ſee how great the advantage is on our ſide*.' And Mr Beach, one almoſt, if not quite, as old, ſaith, 'It is not the 'deſign of the charter, that the Society ſhould ſend miſſiona-'ries to convert *preſbyterians* to the church: and—it is a baſe 'reflection to ſay they do.—They never ſend miſſionaries to 'convert Proteſtants to the Church of England, but to mini-'ſter to church people: and if Diſſenters by that means are 'added to the church, they do not think by this any evil is 'done. This is the truth, and all the truth †.' Accordingly a very reſpectable miſſionary uſes the following words, in a paper not printed, which I have ſeen: 'I believe very few 'inſtances, if any, can be produced of any miſſionary's begin-'ning with any diſſenter, with a view of reclaiming him to 'the church. I have long known the affairs of the Society, 'and know of no ſuch inſtance.'

Therefore Mr Apthorp might well *aver*, as the Doctor tells us he is ſaid to have done, *that he deſires not to make one proſelyte from the congregational church* ‡. The Doctor however thinks, that *there ſeems to be ſome difficulty in reconciling this*

* Preface to Mr Beach's vindication, or addreſs, 1749, p. 5, 6.

† Second Vindication, or addreſs, 1751. p. 67. ‡ Ib. p. 63.

declaration with the hopes expreſſed in his letter to the Society, of future acceſſions to his congregation. But may there not be acceſſions to it by the ſettlement of more members of the Church of England in thoſe parts, or by a change of ſentiments in perſons of other perſuaſions, without Mr Apthorp's interfering? The Doctor, unable or unwilling to perceive ſo obvious a ſolution, charitably helps him to come off, by ſuppoſing, that *perhaps it was from the college, not from the church, that he flattered himſelf with ſuch acceſſions:* adding, *in which he is ſuppoſed to have been not a little diſappointed.* But hath Mr Apthorp attempted to make any proſelytes, either from the church or the college? If not, why is a poor needleſs evaſion aſcribed to him; and a diſappointment ſuppoſed of hopes, which he doth not appear to have entertained? Why ſhould not his declaration, and ſuitable behaviour, be rather deemed another proof, that the miſſionaries underſtand their buſineſs to be, not proſelyting Diſſenters, but officiating to our own people? The Doctor believes indeed, what may ſeem a preſumption of the contrary, *that ſcarce ten families in the town of Cambridge uſually attend the ſervice of the church lately ſet up there**. But it was repreſented to the Society, that fifty families in the town and neighbourhood were deſirous to attend it. And, ſhould they prove to be much fewer, yet ſeveral members of the church of England ſend their children to Harvard college there: and ſuch a place of worſhip, as they and their parents approve, may be reaſonably provided for them, without any deſign of proſelyting others. There is indeed a college in New England, where ſtudents have been forbidden to attend epiſcopal ſervice, and a young man hath been fined for going to hear his own father, an epiſcopal miniſter, preach. But in Harvard college, it ſeems, a better ſpirit prevails: and it is more likely to flouriſh, both for that moderation, and for the new church built near it.

The Doctor ſaith, that in ſome other places *the ſupplicants for miſſionaries have not exceeded eight or ten, or twelve heads of families* †. But if this be true, they have petitioned in the name of others, as well as their own. And ſuppoſing the ſociety to have been miſinformed about their numbers, this may happen notwithſtanding good care; and by no means proves them

* Page 48. † Ibid.

them to have a deſign, which other circumſtances prove they have not.

But the Doctor apprehends, that whatever the number of theſe petitioners any where may be, conſcience is but ſeldom their motive, and therefore they ſhould not be encouraged. Indeed, he ſcarcely ſeems to conceive how it can be their motive; and wants to be told, *what there is that ſhould give offence to good proteſtants* * in the preſbyterian or congregational churches. We muſt not call them independent, for he ſaith, *the Epiſcopalians affect to reproach them under that name* †: tho' Mr Neale, himſelf an Independent, uſes it frequently, and it is more proper, and not reproachful at all. Nor muſt we call them aſſemblies or communions; for he hath rebuked Mr Apthorp and the Archbiſhop of Canterbury for doing it ‡, though he doth it himſelf. In theſe churches therefore, he wants to know what there is that can give offence: and ſo lets himſelf again into his darling topic, of abuſing the Church of England in compariſon. However, he recollects that he hath heard ſome epiſcopalians ſay, and been told that others have ſaid, *that they ſhould much prefer the communion of the church of Rome* § to that of the Diſſenters. And indeed none are ſo likely as he, and ſuch as he, to provoke thoſe into ſaying it, who would think very differently in their cooler hours. But ſuppoſing this to be their ſettled judgment; would he have them left to turn papiſts, if they will, becauſe they are not ſo good proteſtants as they ſhould be? The church of Rome and its ſociety *de propaganda*, would have ground to thank him for eſtabliſhing this notion. But if ſome of his own communion ſhould ſay that they had rather be Anabaptiſts or Quakers, than Churchmen, would that be a reaſon why they ſhould have no miniſter of his communion amongſt them? I ſhould imagine juſt the contrary. Perſons of different parties in religion may think too ill of each other, without wiſhing ill to each other at all; and ſo may mean very well, though they judge greatly amiſs. Or even if they mean ill, they have ſo much the more need of ſuch inſtructors as they eſteem to ſet them right.

But the Doctor, *to do the* epiſcopalians *juſtice, doth not ſuppoſe*

* Page 66. † page 36. ‡ page 67. § Ibid.

poſe that theſe ſentiments generally prevail amongſt them. And he admits, *that ſome of them may poſſibly, without going theſe lengths, have conſcientious ſcruples about the means of religion in* his *communion* *. But he puts the word *poſſibly* in italicks: which intimates, that he thinks it barely poſſible. And this poſſibility he extends no further, in what follows, than to allow that there may be *ſome things or circumſtances which they cannot intirely acquieſce in, or approve of.* Now would he account us to be ſufficiently charitable, if we conceded only ſuch a poſſibility of conſcientiouſneſs to the Diſſenters from the Church of England? If not, why is he ſo extremely ſparing in his conceſſions to us? We hold it to be probable, we hold it to be evident, that many Diſſenters who are far from thinking us worſe than papiſts, yet cannot in conſcience uſe the means of religion in our communion. And ſurely we are intitled to as favourable an opinion from them. Without maintaining that *they have no goſpel miniſters, or ſacraments, or ordinances, or churches* †, we may apprehend, whether rightly or wrongly is not to be diſputed now, but ſincerely however, that Epiſcopacy is of Apoſtolical inſtitution, and that ſcripture affords as good proof of this, as of the appointment of infant baptiſm and the Lord's day. We may apprehend that, after the ceaſing of extraordinary ſpiritual gifts, forms of prayer were always uſed, more or leſs, throughout the Church of Chriſt, and are needful for the obſervance of the ſcripture rule, *Let all things be done decently and in order* ‡. Without judging thoſe who reject both theſe, (for *to their own Maſter they ſtand or fall* §) we may judge it unlawful for us to join in the rejection of either. Nay, were we only to think their miniſtry, compared with that of our church, to be unedifying, and make that our plea for preſerving a ſeparation from them, we ſhould but follow the pattern which many of the Engliſh Diſſenters have ſet.

The Doctor indeed aſſigns very different motives, for the non-compliance of our people: 'Levity, petulance, avarice, 'groundleſs diſguſt at the ſtated miniſter, diſſatisfaction about 'pews and rates, or at being under, or likely to come under 'cenſure for immoral practices. But he doth not affirm po'ſitively that either [he means any] of theſe hath always been 'the

* page 68. † page 63. ‡ 1 Cor. xiv. 10. § Rom. xiv. 4.

'the caſe without exception *.' Here again he is remarkably careful, that his conceſſions to the poor Epiſcopalians ſhall not be too liberal. And to keep on even terms with him, we do not affirm poſitively that none of theſe hath ever been the caſe. But we muſt inſiſt, that the favourable preſumption is the preferable one, and that men's profeſſions, concerning their own inducements, are to be credited, unleſs the contrary appears; which, according to the beſt intelligence that could be got, we believe it hath not ordinarily done, in the matter now under conſideration. On one of theſe heads, *avarice*, the Doctor explains himſelf, by ſaying, that *till a law was made, obliging the epiſcopalians to pay miniſterial rates in common with others*, but *for the ſupport of their own clergy*, epiſcopacy made a great progreſs; and that *if they had been exempted from all miniſterial taxes as the Quakers are; almoſt all who loved their money better than any thing elſe, might in the courſe of a few years have adorned the communion of the church* †. But what needed they who loved their money better than any thing elſe, turn epiſcopalians to ſave it, when turning Quakers would have ſerved the ſame purpoſe more effectually? And have any Epiſcopalians turned Quakers, when they found their former change would ſecure them no longer? If not, this ſuggeſtion is unauthoriſed and unwarrantable. He declines giving any recent inſtances of mens acting upon the motives which he alledges, becauſe if you will believe him to be ſo tender, old ones, given by another perſon, may be leſs invidious. Of theſe he produces two, from a letter of Dr Colman of Boſton, written above 50 years ago to Dean, afterwards Biſhop Kennet. And he obſerves rightly, that the Dean, in his anſwer, expreſſes his belief that they are true. But he plainly believed it only on the information of Dr Colman, a perfect ſtranger to him; nor can any inquiry into the real truth be made now. And I beg leave to obſerve in my turn, that according to Dr Mayhew's own account, for I have no other, the Dean thought the Society was authoriſed *to plant epiſcopal churches*, where, though there was *a ſettled miniſtry, there were* alſo *good numbers, who could not in conſcience conform to the ways of worſhip different from the eſtabliſhed Church of England* ‡. Therefore aſſerting, that the true and only deſign of the

* page 47. † page 49. ‡ page 50,—55.

the Society, in ſending miſſionaries to the Maſſachuſetts and Connecticut, hath always been to provide for ſuch perſons, is not a new plea, ſet up to ſerve a turn. The Dean had good opportunities of knowing its real purpoſes; and ſo worthy a man as Dr Mayhew allows him to be, would not have written as he hath done, if he had ſuſpected any further inſidious ſcheme. Indeed the ſociety, far from having formed a project to epiſcopize (as the Doctor calls it) that country, had but three miſſionaries in it ſeven years after; and the following ones went upon no other errand than the firſt.

After ſaying that the above-mentioned cauſes produced factions and parties, and they produced epiſcopal ſeparations, the Doctor goes on to ſay, that *divers of the miſſionaries have been much injured, (which there is no reaſon to ſuppoſe) if they have not been very buſy in fomenting theſe diviſions; yea, been at the bottom of them* *. But I take the liberty of maintaining, that there is *great* reaſon to ſuppoſe they have been injured. For in all ſuch diſputes it never fails, but each ſide injures the other; and the Miſſionaries would be very ſure of having a double load of calumny thrown upon them. Still, that ſome of them may have been to blame in this reſpect, is not only poſſible, but, conſidering human nature, too likely. And if any where it can be proved that they have been *buſy bodies in other men's matters* †, or uſed bad arts to promote a good cauſe, they ought to be reprimanded, and if they amend not, removed. But the Doctor, conſcious that miſbehaviours of particular perſons would not come up to his point, charges the Society itſelf with *manifeſting a ſufficient forwardneſs to encourage and increaſe ſmall diſaffected parties in towns, upon an application to them*. And this, he ſaith, *appears* ‡. But how it appears, he hath not ſaid, nor can I imagine. The Society hath never been made acquainted with any of the little quarrels in the towns of New England; and were they to know them, they are too remote to give directions about them; unleſs the Doctor can make it *appear*, that they have given their miſſionaries a general direction to inflame them all, as much as they can.

Perhaps he may think that no other cauſes can be alledged, than ſuch as he hath produced, for the increaſe of epiſcopa-

lians.

* Page 57. † 1 Pet iv. 15. ‡ Page 47.

ſtans in thoſe parts. But this would be a great miſtake. Though the firſt planters of New England were ſeparatiſts from our church, many conformiſts to it came afterwards to ſettle there; and ſome of them, as I am credibly informed, were to be found fifty years ago, in almoſt every town of conſiderable ſtanding. Theſe new comers were deſpiſed and reproached for their religious principles by their neighbours; moſt of whom had been taught to think the Church of England nearly as bad as the Church of Rome. Thus attacked, it was natural that they ſhould endeavour to defend themſelves, and procure ſuch books as would enable them to do it better. Some of the more candid and inquiſitive amongſt the preſbyterians and congregationaliſts adventured to hear their defences, and to read their authors; were convinced by them, and became churchmen. As their number grew, it was natural that they ſhould endeavour to procure themſelves miniſters, and on their requeſt the Society helped them. This occaſioned a further augmentation, to which alſo contributed greatly the wild enthuſiaſm that prevailed in ſeveral of the New England churches, even before Mr Whitefield came amongſt them, but was mightily increaſed by him and the ſtrolling teachers that followed him; as did likewiſe their extending ſpiritual cenſures to mere trifles, with their endleſs contentions and confuſions on the ſettling of miniſters, and on various occurences beſides; all which things diſguſted and wearied out many of their people, and induced them to ſeek a peaceable refuge in our communion. If theſe are known facts, as I am aſſured they are, they will go a very great way towards accounting for the growth of the epiſcopal party; and the Doctor ſhould not have ſuppreſſed them, and aſcribed it wholly to ſuch bad and ſuch low motives as he hath done, in order to throw an odium upon the Society, as encouraging what it abhors, for the attainment of a deſign which it never framed.

But the Doctor ſeems to intimate, that *even upon ſuppoſition* that the epiſcopalians in New England, who pleaded that they had no miniſters whom they could attend, were *conſcientious people*, yet they were not *much to be pitied*, or *really objects of charity**. Surely he could not mean this. At leaſt, I ſhould have great compaſſion for a number of Diſſenters in the ſame

* Page 69.

ſtate. Thus much however he allows, that *if any perſons in England, in their private capacity, ſhould think it,* which again rather implies, that he in their condition ſhould not think it, *a deed of charity to ſupport Epiſcopal Churches in New England, for the ſake of thoſe comparatively few conſcientious people, to whom the means of religion, to be had in Proteſtant Diſſenting communions, are no means—they have a right to do it.* But he inſiſts that the Society hath not, *their whole fund and revenue being otherwiſe appropriated;* which he undertakes to prove from their charter.

Now, I acknowledge that the caſe of the New England Epiſcopalians, is not particularly deſcribed and provided for in the charter. But ſo neither is the caſe of any other Indians, than ſuch as are the King's *ſubjects, and people* living *in his plantations and colonies,* for to theſe only the letter of the charter extends; and in reſpect of others, Mr Apthorp might juſtly ſay, that *Indian converſions are undertaken by the Society, as it were ex abundanti.* Yet Dr Mayhew is ſo far from blaming the Society for applying part of their benefactions to the inſtruction of ſuch Indians as only border on his Majeſty's dominions, that he blames them greatly for not applying more of it to that uſe. Now, if their caſe, which exiſted when the charter was granted, and yet is not named in it, may however be looked on as comprehended within its intention, and obtain relief by means of it, in conſequence of the general principle on which it is founded, much more may that of the epiſcopalians, which did not exiſt, and was not foreſeen, and therefore no wonder it was not named. Though it was not expreſsly mentioned before it was in being, ſtill if, when it came into being, it was included under the reaſon and equity of the purpoſes which are expreſsly mentioned; paying regard to it muſt be underſtood to be allowed by the charter, and virtually directed in it. For the rules of law require that grants of Princes, and particularly grants in favour of religion, be interpreted as liberally as may be *. And thus far, I conceive, Mr Apthorp rightly aſſerts, that *the Society have a diſcretionary power of making alterations in their inſtitution;* nor do I believe that he meant to carry it further, however unmerci-

fully

* See thoſe rules in Wood's Inſtitutes of civil law, introd. c. 13. ſect. 3.

ably Dr Mayhew hath treated him * on the ſuppoſition that he did.

If it be doubted, notwithſtanding the above-mentioned argument *à fortiori*, whether the caſe of the New England epiſcopalians comes within the charter or not; I beg the reader's attention to the following additional conſiderations. The King ſets forth in it, as a principal reaſon of granting it, that *for lack of ſupport for miniſters, many of his loving ſubjects want the adminiſtration of God's word and ſacraments.* Now muſt not they who lack ſupport for ſuch miniſters, as they can with a good conſcience attend, want the adminiſtration of God's word and ſacraments? Would not the generality of the Preſbyterians and Congregationaliſts in New England think they wanted it, if there were no other than Epiſcopal churches there? And why may not Epiſcopalians think in a like manner? And can one imagine, that when the King's ſubjects abroad, conformiſts to the church eſtabliſhed in England by law, were, without their own fault, and merely through their ſituation and their poverty, unprovided of ſuch public means of religion as their inward perſuaſion required, it could be agreeable to his Royal Will that they ſhould be excluded from the benefit of this charter? But further, the King recites, that part of his people, through the fore-mentioned unhappy circumſtances, *ſeem to be abandoned to atheiſm and infidelity*, and others are in danger of being *perverted to popiſh ſuperſtition and idolatry*; and both theſe things he was deſirous to prevent. Now, doth not the Doctor think the Epiſcopalians, when they have no miniſters in whoſe miniſtrations they can acquieſce, muſt be grievouſly liable to the one or the other? Particularly, muſt not thoſe of them be in great danger of popery who, as he tells us, prefer that to the worſhip of the prevailing party in New England? And muſt it not be preſumed that the charter would have guarded explicitly againſt theſe evils, had they been foreſeen? But further ſtill, the King declares, that *he thinks it his duty, as much as in him lies, to promote the glory of God by the inſtruction of his people in the Chriſtian religion.* Now, will not this be more fully effected if the Epiſcopalians in New England are inſtructed, than if they are not inſtructed? And laſtly, the King propoſes, that *for accompliſhing the ends* intended

* Page 110,—11[illegible]

by the charter, *a ſufficient maintenance be provided for an orthodox clergy to live amongſt his ſubjects in theſe parts*. I do not lay the greateſt ſtreſs on this laſt clauſe, becauſe it ſpecifies only what ſort of clergy ſhould be ſent, not to whom they ſhould miniſter. And yet, if the intention was, that only clergymen of the Church of England ſhould be employed, (and public authority, I believe, hath never directed others to be employed) it muſt ſurely be intended likewiſe, that all the laity of the Church of England, who could be benefited by them, ſhould.

Here indeed the Doctor objects, that *orthodoxy, in its moſt common uſe, hath no reference to eccleſiaſtical polity* *. But ſuppoſing that, why may not the charter uſe it in its original and not uncommon ſignification, of right notions in religious matters, whether they relate to faith or morals, or worſhip, or church government? The head of an Epiſcopal Church cannot be deemed indifferent about any of theſe; eſpecially in forming a corporation, into which, I believe, no one Diſſenter was by the charter admitted. But he objects again, that King William, *though as Head of the Church of England, there was a neceſſity of his externally conforming to its rules and diſcipline, cannot be ſuppoſed by orthodox miniſters to have intended thoſe of the Church of England, in diſtinction from others* †. Thus he is pleaſed to repreſent, for the ſake of his hypotheſis, our glorious deliverer as a mere *external*, and conſequently hypocritical conformiſt: though it is well known, that on his death-bed he was attended by miniſters of our church and no other, and received the ſacrament from a Biſhop's hands. Nor, I preſume, is the Doctor ignorant, that he ſettled 100*l.* a year on an Epiſcopal Church at Boſton ‡; which clearly ſhows, that he thought Epiſcopal Churches proper objects of royal bounty, even in places where there was a ſettled miniſtry of another ſort before. And his ſucceſſors, to this day, have thought in the ſame manner. But had he been ever ſo rigid a non-conformiſt, every word of his charter muſt have been interpreted, not by his private opinion, but by the ſpirit of the laws and the conſtitution.

The Doctor pleads alſo, that *divers* of the *New England laws*, relative to miniſters, *in which they are deſigned as orthodox, have*

* Page 60. † Page 20. ‡ Humphry's account, p. 7, 313.

have had the allowance of the King *. And had the intent of theſe laws been to enact, that they were orthodox, the plea would have been of ſome weight. But where the King only aſſents to a bill, framed for another purpoſe, in which this word, uſed by them concerning themſelves, is to be found, his connivance at their uſe of it, againſt which it might have been hurtful to object, can never ſhow, in what ſenſe he uſes it of his own accord in an Engliſh charter. He ſaith likewiſe from Mr Hobart, that *if we think none but the clergy of the Church of England are in a legal ſenſe orthodox miniſters, we may be informed how that matter was determined by the King in Council, in the cauſe between Mr Macſparran and Mr Torrey* †. But the council did not declare the Diſſenting miniſters to be orthodox in the legal ſenſe, but in the ſenſe of the donors of the land in diſpute. And this anſwer Mr Beach gave long ago to Mr Hobart ‡. But the Doctor hath choſen to repeat the objection, without taking notice of the anſwer.

He urges alſo, that if *we deny the New England miniſters the title of orthodox, we muſt deny it to the miniſters of all other churches, except perhaps that of Rome* §, and *engroſs the whole of that precious commodity*, as he ſcornfully calls it, *to our own party* ‖. Now he knows in his heart, that we think the Church of Rome far more heterodox than we do any of the Proteſtant Churches, yet he could not reſiſt the temptation of inſinuating the contrary. I hope his conſcience will do him the kind office of putting him to the bluſh in private, for this and many like inſtances of diſingenuity. As to other churches, ſo far as their opinions differ from ours, be it in points more or leſs material, we do indeed think them miſtaken, or, if the Doctor pleaſes, heterodox; but without the leaſt contempt of them, or breach of brotherly love towards them; and we allow them to think us ſo, without taking it amiſs. But he hath thought fit to acquaint us, that heterodoxy and hereſy are the ſame thing ¶. So that whoever diſſents from Dr Mayhew in any point relative to Chriſtian faith, it ſeems, is accounted by him an heretic. His New England brethren, if indeed they acknowledge him for a brother, are deſired to conſider the conſequences

* Page 61. † Page 62, 63. ‡ Second vindication or addreſs, 69.
§ Page 61. ‖ Page 59. ¶ Page 20, 58, 61.

conſequences of this way of thinking. *We have not ſo learned Chriſt* *.

But the Doctor hath not yet done with orthodoxy. *That precious commodity*, he fancies will afford him ſtill further advantages. And therefore he tells us, it is known, or at leaſt generally ſuppoſed amongſt them, that their New England *miniſters adhere much more cloſely both to the letter and the ſpirit of the doctrinal articles* of our church, than *moſt of the Epiſcopal clergy themſelves* †. Thus imaginary notorieties and vague ſuppoſitions, anſwer equally the Doctor's end of blackening the Epiſcopalians in the eſteem of his neighbours, by imputing to them deviations from the eſtabliſhed faith, for which, if they were real, he would, *unleſs* (to uſe *his* own words) *he is much injured*, like them the better. We can only deny the charge, and put him on the proof, which we do. And he would ſeem to attempt a proof in reſpect of Mr Apthorp, ſetting ſome paſſages in a ſermon of his, and ſome of the 39 articles, in a pretended oppoſition ‡: though it is viſible at firſt ſight, that Mr Apthorp ſpeaks only againſt the doctrine of unconditional reprobation, and the extravagancies of the Antinomians, and that the articles quoted aſſert neither of them. But this accuſation ſerved a double purpoſe; of intimating firſt, that Mr Apthorp ſubſcribed the articles inſincerely, and then affecting to bring him off by a ſubterfuge, of which he hath no need, that *poſſibly he hath altered his opinion ſince*.

I have dwelt too long, in complaiſance to the Doctor, on the term *orthodox*. Now I proceed with his proofs of the Society's miſconduct. He alledges that Dr Bray *took great pains to inform himſelf of the ſtate of religion in the colonies, and delivered it, as the reſult of his inquiries, that he found no need at all of miſſionaries in Connecticut and the Maſſachuſetts* §. This again he quotes from Mr Hobart; and again omits to take notice of the full anſwer which Mr Beach had given to it fourteen years ago, in theſe words: "I grant there was a time, when, as Dr "Bray ſaith, there was little or no occaſion of ſending miſ-"ſionaries to the Maſſachuſetts or Connecticut, becauſe there "were then few or no church people who wanted a miniſter. "Yet now the caſe is very much alter'd; and as there are "ſome

* Eph. iv. 20. † Page 60 ‡ Page 76, 77. § Page 41, 42.

"ſome thouſands, ſo they are like to increaſe *." Had the deſign of the Society, in ſending miſſionaries to thoſe two governments, been to make proſelytes, they would have thought there was moſt need, inſtead of no need, to ſend, when there were feweſt church people in them. But they ſent none for eight or nine years, as Dr Mayhew himſelf obſerves †: and they have ſent them afterwards, juſt as the neceſſities of the people required; not to propagate the peculiarities of the Church of England, as he pretends ‡, but to preſerve a due ſenſe of Chriſtianity, and perform religious offices amongſt its members.

The Doctor alledges alſo, that *in ſome churches, which, according to the abſtracts, have been repreſented as growing, flouriſhing, and increaſing in reputation, for near half a century, the number of ſtated worſhippers at this day, very little, if any thing, exceeds ten or twelve families* §. Yet he tells us himſelf, that in 1718, which is not half a century ago, there were but *three miſſions in all New England* ‖: and every one of theſe far exceeds that number of families; as do the latter alſo, if we may believe accounts, as credible as the Doctor's, who, though he denies thoſe of the miſſionaries to be true, confeſſes, that *the direct proof of a negative, in ſuch caſes, is no eaſy matter* ¶. The Society wiſh, and endeavour to be well informed, concerning the number of families in every miſſion. If they are miſinformed only in ſome few inſtances, it is neither a great marvel nor a great objection. And if they apprehend many miſſions to be more conſiderable than they are, ſince Epiſcopacy thrives ſo poorly, the Doctor hath no reaſon to be alarmed about it. For ſuppoſing them to have engaged in the enterprize which he imagines, they will certainly grow ſick of it and abandon it. But indeed I doubt, whether any one of them ever dreamt of what he is pleaſed to ſay *hath long been their formal deſign, the true plan and grand myſtery of their operations in* New England *.

Another thing aſſerted by him, is, that after Epiſcopal congregations *in ſome places have become well able to ſupport their own miniſters, the Society have ſtill continued to pay theſe:* to which he adds, that *the only reaſon, why he doth not come to*

particu-

* Second vindication or addreſs, p. 67, 68. † p. 44. ‡ p. 43.
§ p. 48. ‖ p. 44. ¶ p. 83. * p. 49.

particulars, is, leſt it ſhould ſeem too invidious; and that *this conduct of the Society for ſome years, proved no inconſiderable means of increaſing the church party**. Now, the Society hath always been deſirous to know, when any congregation became able to ſupport itſelf without their help; and have never continued their contribution, when they have underſtood that to be the caſe. If their friends have been too ſlow in giving them intelligence, which may have happened, and the Doctor will favour them with any, which on inquiry ſhall appear to be well grounded, they will both be thankful to him, and ſhow the world that they are far from wiſhing to increaſe the church party by profuſe liberalities.

The Doctor exaggerates the fault, with which he charges the Society, of miſapplying their money, by alledging further, that they have done no good by it. He declares, that *he never knew an example of any proſelyte from their churches to ours, being brought back to a Chriſtian life:* but that there *are numerous ones of perſons, whoſe morals, though exceptionable before, were much worſe afterwards;* that *they often become looſe, profligate, vain and cenſorious, ſeemingly placing no ſmall part of their religion in railing at their congregational and preſbyterian neighbours*†. Now, in anſwer to an accuſation of the ſame nature, brought by Mr Hobart, Mr Beach hath *ſeriouſly declared, that he hath known many perſons who have greatly improved in virtue by the change*‡. And other worthy miſſionaries have declared the ſame thing. The Doctor indeed will perhaps treat me for producing miſſionaries, as he hath Mr Apthorp for producing members of the Society, as *witneſſes in* what he calls *their own cauſe*§. But the teſtimony of its accuſer is not more admiſſible. The zealots of all parties, and thoſe of his own at leaſt, as much as others, are mighty apt to ſpeak with over great ſeverity of ſuch as forſake them. And if the Doctor himſelf doth not place ſome part of his religion in railing at the Epiſcopalians, it is very hard to account for his practiſing it ſo much. But beſides, the queſtion is not, whether proſelytes to the Church of England grow better, but whether the members of the Church of England would not grow worſe, if they had no ſtated miniſtry to prevent it.

Inattentive

* Ibid. † page 82. ‡ Firſt vindication or addreſs, p. 43.

§ page 9, 70.

Inattentive to this, he urges further, that ſwearing, gaming, *&c. are beyond all compariſon more frequent, ſince the Church of England prevailed there, than before**. Yet Mr Beach ſaith, *he is perſuaded, that ſolid Chriſtian virtue, as well as knowledge, increaſes, as the church gains ground in the country; and thouſands of people are really bettered by it in their moral character*†. But ſuppoſing the above-mentioned vices are more frequent ſince that time, ſo I fear theſe and others are in England ſince the Revolution and the toleration. But would it not be very wicked to aſcribe the increaſe of them to either of theſe? Are the miſſionaries examples of vice? The Doctor hath not dared to ſay it. Do they preach in favour of vice? Are they not as diligent and zealous to the full in teaching moral duties, as the miniſters of his communion, if not more ſo? And why then are the immoralities, of which he ſpeaks, to be imputed to them, or the Society, or the Church of England, when perhaps his own friends are as much degenerated as any? He declares indeed, that *he will not affirm that this is greatly the work of the Society*. But he hath done his utmoſt to make others think it; and, I ſuppoſe, imagines that Epiſcopalians deſerve no better treatment. In one thing however he hath dealt very fairly. After expreſſing his perſuaſion, that *there is leſs religion in thoſe parts of New England, where* the Society's money *hath been expended, than there would have been had it been ſunk in the ocean*, he adds, *'tis not to be ſuppoſed that any Epiſcopalians can be of this opinion; neither is any ſtreſs laid upon it in the preſent argument*‡.

Mr Apthorp aſſerts, that, inſtead of harm, the New England miſſionaries have done great good there; *that the religious ſtate of the country is manifeſtly improved,*—though *much indeed remains to be done in manners and piety*. And here the Doctor, with his uſual charity, repreſents him as making a *conceſſion, that this boaſted Reformation very little, if at all, conſiſts in the improvement of piety and morals* §. Then he proceeds, without any occaſion given him, to a mock defence of the *formal air*, which he admits the old divines of that country had, compared with the *jovial countenances* which he aſcribes to the miſſionaries ‖. What the Doctor's countenance

* Page 75. † Second Vindication, or addreſs, p. 65.
‡ page 96, 97. § page 73. ‖ page 74

is, I know not; but I wiſh he gave as good proofs of a ſerious heart, as the miſſionaries in general do. That religion wore a gloomy and uninviting appearance amongſt the Puritans there formerly, and now wears a more pleaſing one amongſt their deſcendants, and that in part they have learnt this alteration for the better from the members of the Church of England, the Doctor, I preſume, will not deny, though he will not permit an Epiſcopalian to ſay it; and Mr Apthorp did not mean to ſay more on this head.

What he ſaith in the next place, of the improvements lately made there in the ſpeculative doctrines of religion, the Doctor endeavours to conſtrue into the licentious inſult on their *fathers* and teachers, *living and dead* *; of which Mr Apthorp had evidently no intention, though he doth uſe a ſtrong expreſſion or two, which probably were not meant even of the dead teachers at large, but of the wild ſectaries with which that country abounded †. At leaſt they cannot be meant of the living fathers, becauſe he both owns and pleads, that the faults which he blames are amended. And, after abuſing him for ſome time, the Doctor himſelf allows, *it was too common a thing for people in New England to expreſs themſelves in a manner juſtly exceptionable upon theſe points;* and that they may be *indebted to the Society* or their *miſſionaries*, in ſome *degree*, for their doing otherwiſe now ‡. So that in the main he agrees with Mr Apthorp, at the ſame time that he inveighs againſt him; and probably wiſhes that far greater changes were made in the ſpeculative doctrines of his brethern, than the Society and its miſſionaries would approve.

Mr Apthorp adds, that *hypocriſy hath worn off, in proportion as men have ſeen the beauty of holineſs*: that is, in proportion as the face of religion hath become amiable, and its doctrines have been rationally explained; the two things which he had mentioned immediately before. But the Doctor chuſes to miſunderſtand him of the beauty *of rites, and modes, and forms*, in order to get an opportunity of reproaching the Church of England again, as placing holineſs *in a zeal for theſe* §, which it notoriouſly doth not. I wiſh others were as far from placing it in a zeal againſt them.

The

* Page 75. † See Humphrey's account, page 36, 37, 38.
‡ page 78. § page 79.

The laſt inſtance of religious improvement, in which Mr Apthorp thinks the miſſionaries have been inſtrumental, is, the *exterminating of perſecution.* On this the Doctor obſerves, that *no acts of uniformity ever took place in New England**. Very true, for they could not obtain them: elſe there was a time when they certainly would. But they made a ſhift to perſecute pretty effectually without them. He adds, that no perſecution *had been known amongſt them for many years before the Society was in being*†. But can he prove that they held it unlawful before that time? He repreſents it as incredible, that *the poſterity of thoſe who had perſecuted their fathers in America,* ſhould *teach* the preſent generation their *charity and moderation?* But why more incredible, than that the poſterity of thoſe who had perſecuted the Quakers in America ſhould now be enemies to perſecution? The act of toleration was paſſed by members of the Church of England. Mr Locke, a member of the ſame church, was, of all Engliſh writers, the greateſt advocate for toleration. The eſteem of it increaſed continually. The generality of our miſſionaries, I hope, carried that eſteem with them into New England. The need of toleration there muſt recommend it ſtill more to their good opinion; the neceſſity of allowing it to them muſt gradually reconcile others to an approbation of that allowance; and better motives, I doubt not, co-operated with theſe: Which had the ſtrongeſt influence, I do not undertake to determine. But ſurely the Doctor goes too far, when he ſaith, *Wherever we learnt Chriſtian charity towards thoſe who differ from us, we did not learn it of the Church of England.* Where elſe they learnt it, he doth not ſay; and they certainly might learn it from her, unleſs they diſdained to learn any thing from her. Where he learnt it indeed will be very needleſs to enquire, till he gives better proofs of his having learnt it at all. For one who uſes his pen in ſuch a manner, ſeems but too likely, notwithſtanding a few expreſſions of gentler import here and there, to uſe other weapons, if he had the command of them. Yet I do not ſuſpect him of *hoping to ſhoot* Epiſcopalians *as freely as pigeons;* though he ſaith it is credibly reported, that *ſome of the warm Epiſcopalians hope for the time when they may*

* page 79. † page 80.

treat *Diſſenters* ſo*. Mr Beach, on the other hand, hath actually *heard ſome of the* Preſbyterians *ſay, it was pity that all thoſe, who firſt ſet up the worſhip of God, according to the Church of England in that country, had not been hanged, as the Quakers were formerly at Boſton*†. Such hot-headed creatures, I am perſuaded, ſay much more than they deliberately think; and are too few, on either ſide, to deſerve the notice of the other. The New England Epiſcopalians in general, ſo far as I can learn, ſincerely deſire to live amicably with their neighbours. And amongſt the Engliſh, with whom my acquaintance hath been pretty extenſive, and without whom the others cannot be formidable, I know not a man of the clergy or laity, and do not believe there is one in a hundred, perhaps I might ſay a thouſand, who wiſhes to overturn the preſent toleration of the Diſſenters. I ſhould be glad of an aſſurance, that they wiſh no worſe to the Church eſtabliſhment. The Doctor ſaith, *they do not in all reſpects find the kindeſt uſage from* us, *being ſubject to divers temporal inconveniences*‡. I ſuppoſe he hath principally in view the Teſt-act. Now, without digreſſing to enquire whether this be juſtifiable or not, they who approve of reſtraining them ſo far, may heartily diſapprove any further reſtraints; nay, many of them hath given the ſtrongeſt evidence that they do. And perhaps as many Epiſcopalians in New England are excluded from offices without law, as Diſſenters here by law, on account of their religion. But enough of this.

The Doctor argues moreover, that even ſuppoſing the miſſionaries in New England to have done good there, *though it may be ſome apology, it will not juſtify the Society, if it hath occaſioned the neglect of a much greater good to the heathens, or unprovided colonies*§, *who had an excluſive right to the money which had been ſunk in the Epiſcopal gulph*||. But the excluſive right hath been diſproved, and there hath been no deſigned neglect. The heathens meant muſt be either the Indians or the negroes. Now the Doctor owns, that *as to the* Indians, *there have been, and ſtill are, ſome great diſcouragements in attempting to chriſtianize them. But* he ſaith, that *according to divers appearances, the Society have had this work leſs at heart than*

* Page 81. † Vindication, or addreſs, p. 28. ‡ page 80.
§ page 72. || page 92.

than that of propagating Epiſcopacy in New England*. I hope he would not have the complaint made by the Indian Sachem, in June 1700†, reckoned amongſt theſe appearances, for the Society was not incorporated till a year after. But he ſaith, that *the accuſation of neglecting the natives in America, hath been in ſome ſort allowed to be juſt by* the Society *themſelves;* and brings, for a proof of it, Biſhop William's ſermon before them in 1605‡. Now, unhappily for the Doctor, Biſhop Williams doth not ſpeak of the Society, in the words which he quotes, but of the Engliſh nation. Nor could he ſpeak of the Society, as neglecting the Indians, and yet leſs as neglecting them to propagate Epiſcopacy in New England; for the Society had not ſubſiſted five years, and had but one, if any, miſſionary in that whole province. But the Biſhop's words ſounded ſo plauſibly for a charge upon the Epiſcopalians, that he could not forbear miſapplying them. He affirms, that *it would not be difficult to juſtify this complaint by an appeal to any of the later ſermons before the Society*, I conceive it would, and he hath not attempted it. In one place he expreſſes a doubt, whether the Society have ſo much as *begun to uſe methods of converting either the* Negroes *or the* Indians. But in another he owns, that *they had made ſome eſſays from time to time towards the converſion of the ſavages; but very feeble and ſparing* ones, *compared with the zeal of the* French *to popize the* Indians, *or with their own zeal to* Epiſcopize New England§. Now indeed they have ſhewn no zeal to Epiſcopize New England; and it is much eaſier (I go on with the Doctor's language) to popize than to Chriſtianize the Indians. Teaching them a few words and ceremonies, of which they know not the meaning; giving them a few trinkets, and inſpiring them with a mortal hatred againſt the Engliſh, makes them good Chriſtians enough to ſerve the purpoſes of the French; and no wonder that ſuch converſions are effected with eaſe. Our Society cannot undertake to make proſelytes in this manner. Beſides, it hath not ſuch numbers to employ, ſuch funds to maintain them, or ſuch authority to require their perſeverance in the work. Many of their miſſionaries are under vows of abſolute obedience, none of ours are; and therefore they will engage to go only where they chuſe, and will ſtay no longer than they chuſe.

* page 98. † p. 107. ‡ p. 98. § p. 134, 135.

chuſe. Reaſonable perſons will be moderate in blaming them, if they conſider the manifold diſagreeableneſs and danger of ſuch an employment; but at leaſt they will be far from blaming the Society for not ſending miſſionaries, when they cannot procure them. And that they have failed to uſe their beſt endeavours for procuring them, the Doctor doth not aſſert.

Inſtead of this, he firſt inſinuates, without proof, what would be nothing to his purpoſe if true, that *the miſſionaries have frequently given the world* too *pompous accounts of their efforts, and ſpoken hyperbolically of their difficulties and been* too *ſoon diſcouraged**; and then goes on to make remarks on Mr now Dr Barclay's miſſion, about twenty-five years ago, as if nothing worth notice had been attempted before. He is careful indeed to tell us, that an order of council was made very early [in 1702] for ſending two Proteſtant miniſters to the Indians of the five nations; that this order was communicated to the Society and referred to the committee†. But that any thing was done, or tried upon it, or about the ſame time with it, he hath not given the leaſt hint. Yet he might have known, and probably did know, from Dr Humphreys, to whom Mr Apthorp refers his readers, not only that the Society ſent a miſſionary that very year, the firſt after it was formed, to endeavour the converſion of the Indians bordering on South Carolina, and that *the Governor and other gentlemen there, thinking it not to be a proper ſeaſon*, diſpoſed of him another way‡: but that, in purſuance of the above order, the Society, after inviting unſucceſsfully a Dutch and an Engliſh miniſter, who lived in the neighbourhood of thoſe nations, to undertake their converſion, prevailed on the Rev. Mr Thoroughgood Moor to go upon this deſign in 1704, who applied to the Mohocks, and acquainted them, *that another miniſter was daily expected for the* Oneydes, *and one for every other nation, as ſoon as proper and willing perſons could be found;* that they ſeemed at firſt highly pleaſed with the care thus taken of them; but would give no determinate anſwers to his offers of inſtructing them, nor at laſt any anſwers at all, *though he uſed all the means he could think of to get there good-will:* ſo after a twelve months trial he left them, and was ſoon after loſt at ſea§. The Doctor might alſo have known,

* page 99. † p. 108. ‡ p. 108. § p. 286,—294.

known, if he did not, that Mr Barclay, a different perſon from the above-mentioned, being ſent miſſionary to the ſame Indians in or before 1709, *tried all the methods he could to engage them to be inſtructed in our language and religion, but with very ſmall ſucceſs; that ſeveral indeed would ſeem for a time to be converted, but ſoon after would return again to their former ſavage life**.

His paſſing over in ſilence the following account is ſtill more obſervable. In 1710, the requeſt of the four Sachems, who came over to England, that their ſubjectsmight be inſtructed in Chriſtianity by reſident miniſters, being thought to favour a new attempt, *the ſociety agreed to ſend two miſſionaries to the* Mohock and Oneydes Indians, *with a ſalary of* 150 *l. ſterling each, together with an interpreter and ſchoolmaſter to teach the young* Indians. Accordingly Mr Andrews was ſent over as miſſionary, and an interpreter and ſchoolmaſter were aſſigned him. He was preſented to the Indians with great ſolemnity, and received by them with great marks of joy; but the parents obſtinately refuſed to let their children learn Engliſh. Therefore both parents and children were inſtructed in the Indian tongue, as well as the nature of it would permit. But in a ſhort time they grew weary of being taught. Their fathers would not ſuffer their boys to be corrected or diſpleaſed, in order to their learning any thing. As they grew up, they took them along with them, when they went out in bodies to hunt, for ſeveral months together, and they could not be brought to a ſettled life. They took and diſmiſſed wives at their pleaſure; were continually making expeditions, and practiſing cruelties one upon another; left their aged men and women to periſh; got drunk whenever they could, and in their drunkenneſs were mad and miſchievous to the higheſt degree. They who had learnt ſomething, ſhewed in their lives no regard to it; and even the four Sachems became ſavages again. French Jeſuits from Canada inſtilled into them jealouſies by falſe aſſertions which Popiſh miſſionaries never ſcruple; and ſome of the Juſcararo Indians, driven from North Carolina, which they had perfidiouſly attacked, filled them with ſuch groundleſs reſentments by unjuſt repreſentations of what had paſſed there, that they forbad Mr Andrews to viſit them at their habitations,

* Page 215, 216,

bitations, would no longer come to the chapel or the ſchool, nor ſuffer him to ſpeak of religion to them when he met them occaſionally, but inſulted and threatened him and his companions, who were in danger of their lives whenever they ventured out of the Fort, where they dwelt. At length therefore he repreſented to the Society, that he deſpaired of any further ſucceſs. Yet they would not hearken to his ſingle narration and opinion, but requeſted Mr Hunter, Governor of New York, to make inquiry, whether continuing his miſſion was likely to be of uſe. And on the Governor's confirming the accounts which Mr Andrews had given, they recalled him, after a trial of ſix years *.

I beg the reader to compare theſe relations, taken from authentic papers, with the Doctor's unauthorized ſuggeſtions, that the miſſionaries told what ſtories they would, and the Society believed them without examination, or wilfully neglected this part of their buſineſs. Without entering into the ſubſequent particulars of this Indian undertaking, I ſhall only ſay in general, that other miſſionaries were ſent afterwards, and with ſome effect, down to the year 1735, when the firſt-mentioned Mr Barclay went, of whoſe miſſion alone the Doctor is pleaſed to take notice, becauſe he thinks it will afford matter of objection.

Accordingly he alledges, that Mr Barclay had not *half a proper ſupport*, but the *miſſion was ſtarved*. For Mr Serjeant, a miſſionary from the Society incorporated in 1661, reports, from a letter of Mr Barclay, that *he had but a ſcanty allowance* (i. e. from the Society) *and could obtain no ſalary for an interpreter or ſchoolmaſter* †. And Mr Barclay himſelf ſaith, in a letter, June 11. 1736, that *he laboured under great diſadvantage for want of an interpreter, which could he but enjoy for two or three years, he ſhould be maſter of the* Indian *language* ‡. Now when Mr Barclay wrote theſe letters, of which I know nothing but from the Doctor, he was not a miſſionary, but a catechiſt only. And though he had, as he ſaith, but a ſcanty allowance, *i. e.* 30*l.* a-year from the Society, yet he expected *further encouragement* from them, and the aſſembly of New York had alſo voted him 30*l.* a-year, which may account for the ſmallneſs of the Society's allowance. Only he had not received either of the

 ſalaries

* Page 295,—311. † page 101. ‡ page 102.

ſalaries *. But, before the end of the ſame year, he wrote to the Society, that he had made himſelf maſter of the Mohock language, which probably induced them to think an interpreter unneceſſary. The next year they raiſed his ſalary to 50*l.* Why he deſired in 1740 an interpreter, as well as a ſchoolmaſter, appears not; but in the ſame year a ſchoolmaſter was allowed him That the Society ſhould be cautious and frugal in the firſt trial of a young man, after ſo many diſappointments, is far from being ſtrange. And the expence of an interpreter for two or three years, which is all that Mr Barclay wiſhed, could not poſſibly be grudged, in order to ſave ſo trifling a ſum towards a more favourite purpoſe, as the Doctor would have it believed. Nor did the miſſion miſcarry for want of due ſupport, as he leads his readers to imagine it did. What he quotes from Mr Apthorp, that *from the lateſt accounts we find this miſſion much dwindled, or greatly interrupted*, relates to the ſtate of things brought on eighteen years afterwards by the late war. Mr Barclay's miſſion was carried on with ſeeming ſucceſs till about the year 1745, by which time the French had infuſed ſuch dreadful imaginations into our Indians, and incited their own to ſuch violences, that it was no longer ſafe for Mr Barclay to ſtay amongſt them. There is therefore not the leaſt ground for the Doctor's pretence, that the Indians did not think the Engliſh in earneſt, or that the French made their advantage of any negligence of the ſociety. Inſtead of deſpiſing what the Society was doing, they were alarmed at it, and employed both all their uſual arts and open force to defeat it. However, Mr Oel, a German clergyman, appointed by the Society, ſtaid with the Indians during the war, in which they were faithful to this country. And he, and Paulus, a Mohock, whom the Society made ſchoolmaſter, were ſtill doing the beſt they could there, when the laſt accounts came. Mr Barclay being ſettled at New York in 1746, Mr Ogilvie was ſent in his ſtead to the Indians in 1748, who found that many of them were removed into the French territory, and the reſt ſo much addicted to drunkenneſs, which hath ſince deſtroyed a great part of them, that he had little hopes, excepting from the children, and not much from them, unleſs they were maintained in houſes appropriated to their inſtruction. Now this undertaking would

* Page 102, 103.

not only be exceſſively expenſive, particularly becauſe the parents muſt be well entertained as often as they pleaſed to viſit their children, but in all likelihood fruitleſs, conſidering their diſpoſitions with reſpect to their children already mentioned. Mr Ogilvie took one by way of trial, cloathed, maintained, and inſtructed him. But his friends fetched him away, leſt he ſhould learn to deſpiſe his own nation. Notwithſtanding all this, Mr Ogilvie continued his endeavours there, till he was carried off in 1758, for his Majeſty's ſervice, by the commander in chief of his forces in thoſe parts. There are ſtill, or lately were, hopes of his return; in the mean time, the Rev. Mr Brown ſupplies his place.

Beſides theſe attempts, and ſeveral other occaſional ones by ſeveral miſſionaries, one of which, by Mr Beach, he ſaith, was fruſtrated by the Diſſenters prejudicing the Indians againſt him *; there was a reſolution taken by the Society in 1743, to eſſay the converſion of the Moſkitto Indians, which Mr Hobart hath miſrepreſented. He ſaith, *the Society ſpent ſo much time in endeavouring to perſuade either the Indians themſelves, or the Government of Jamaica, to ſupport the miſſionary, that though the letter from the Indians, requeſting aſſiſtance, bears date May* 19. 1739, *yet Mr Prince, at the time of his death, July* 25. 1748, *had not reached the place of his miſſion* †. Any reader would conclude from hence, that the letter from the Indians was either written to the Society, or inſtantly communicated to them, and that the delay aroſe wholly from their unwillingneſs to part with their money on the occaſion. But the truth is, that the Indians applied in 1739, to Mr Trelawney, Governor of Jamaica, without naming the Society, whoſe firſt knowledge of their application was in the latter end of the year 1742: that on this they wrote immediately to the Governor, not to perſuade any perſons to contribute, but ſolely to enquire whether the Indians were able or the Jamaicans willing, which was ſurely a juſtifiable piece of prudence: that as ſoon as they had his anſwer, giving no ground to hope for pecuniary aſſiſtance, which was in a few months, they agreed to ſend a miſſionary and ſchoolmaſter; that Mr Prince, then in America, being recommended to them for this work ſhortly after, they agreed without delay to accept him, if he brought

* Second Vindication, or Addreſs, page 70. † Hobart's ſecond Addreſs, page 141.

brought proper teſtimonials; but that objections were made to him from thence, which could not be fully diſcuſſed under a conſiderable time: that when his character was cleared, he was directed to come over, and ordained; that he returned as ſoon as he could, but died on his way from Jamaica to the place of his deſtination; that on hearing this, the Society ordered another miſſionary to be provided, but no one could be got. Evidently there was no backwardneſs in this caſe; but aſſiſtance was moſt readily ſent to Indians not comprehended within the letter of the charter, not being in any of his Majeſty's colonies; on which account the treaſury refuſed Mr Prince the uſual bounty granted to miſſionaries, and it was made up to him by the Society, who might eaſily and plauſibly have excuſed themſelves from engaging in this matter, if they had not really had it at heart.

From theſe various attempts it appears, that the Society have always been deſirous, always endeavouring to make impreſſions on the Indians. And from their bad ſucceſs with thoſe on whom they beſtowed the moſt pains, it appears, that notwithſtanding their ſeeming good inclinations towards Chriſtianity, and their petitions to be inſtructed in it, on which the Doctor lays ſo much weight *, they were either inſincere, or quickly changed their minds, and grew intractable; ſo that appointing more miſſionaries, if the Society could have found them, would probably have been little elſe than *ſinking* more *money*, if I may preſume to imitate his ſtyle, *in the Indian gulph* †, inſtead of making *thoſe tribes in general profeſſed Chriſtians*, which he deſires to have it thought would have been the conſequence. His Preſbyterian and Congregational friends have had a much longer ſpace of time for this work than the Society; they have alſo lived in great numbers amongſt the Indians, which is another advantage. Yet I fear the fact is rather, that few Indians are left in New England, than that many are Chriſtians. And though the Doctor tells us, that two miſſionaries, lately ſent from Boſton to the five, otherwiſe ſix nations, gave *very encouraging accounts of their diſpoſition* ‡, one cannot help doubting, whether theſe accounts will end in any thing better than the above-mentioned like accounts given to the Society. I heartily wiſh they may. But ſure-

* Page 105, 106. † page 109. ‡ page 105.

ly as yet, it is too early to inſult us with the ſuperiority of their ſucceſs to ours.

The Doctor ſaith, Mr Barclay's *miſſion was ſtarved**: I hope the contrary hath appeared. Much leſs was it ſtarved to propagate Epiſcopacy in New England, for at that time the Society had ſcarce any miſſionaries there; yet in a great meaſure it failed like the reſt. And therefore it is very unjuſt to impute the failure of any to that cauſe, when it may be ſo naturally imputed to thoſe which produced the ſame effect before; and are likely, though not ſo likely, to do it again. However, in the beginning of the year 1756, the Society conſulted ſome of their American friends, whether a few Indian boys might not be procured, and taught in the colleges of New York and Philadelphia, and ſent from thence to inſtruct their countrymen. The anſwers to them repreſented great difficulties of obtaining children, greater ſtill of keeping them long enough; and no ſmall danger of national reſentment, if any accident ſhould happen to any of them. The Society notwithſtanding, the College of New York being not as yet in a condition to receive any ſuch children, reſolved to give 100*l.* a-year towards educating ſome in that of Philadelphia, in which they had hope alſo of future aſſiſtance. But a freſh war ſoon broke out. Now, in a time of war, and it ſhould be remembered, that there have been very frequent ones ſince the incorporation of the Society, ſome taking their riſe in Europe, ſome only in America, little or nothing can be done, even with the friendly Indians, in favour of religion. On the late peace with France, another Indian war hath unexpectedly followed. When God in his mercy ſhall permit thoſe regions to enjoy tranquility again, it will be a proper ſeaſon to reſume this project. In the mean while, our Society hath agreed with that of 1661, to ſend jointly a lay inſtructor to the ſix nations, as ſoon as it is ſafe, and to bear much the greateſt part of the expence. The Doctor, it is hoped, will, on conſidering theſe things, retract his aſſertion, that *little more can be ſaid, than that the Indians have not been wholly neglected by the Society*†. At leaſt, as it hath never been charged with remiſſneſs in this article, either by the government at home, or by any of the ſucceſſive governors abroad, this may ſurely be

* page 104. † page 100.

be accounted as conſiderable a preſumption in its behalf, as his opinion is againſt it. And I dare ſay the promiſes, which it voluntarily and freely made to the King on his acceſſion, will be faithfully kept, as far as the means of fulfilling them can be found.

With reſpect to the negroes, the Doctor is not particular in his accuſation of the Society, and therefore a general anſwer will ſuffice. He obſerves juſtly, that *our Weſt India iſlands abound with them* *, and ſo do ſome of our plantations on the continent. But in both they live under the abſolute government, chiefly of hard maſters; too many of whom forbid them to be inſtructed in religion, and others deprive them of time for it, by making it neceſſary that on Sundays they ſhould work for themſelves. Where they are allowed to attend the miniſter of the pariſh, they are properly under his care; and where negroes abound moſt, the pariſhes are in general ſo well endowed, that the Society at preſent have not, and need not have miſſionaries in them; but proviſion, even for the loweſt of the people, may be eaſily made without them. Where they have miſſionaries, the negroes are underſtood to be part of their flock, whom they are ſtrictly charged not to neglect. In thoſe places where there are no miniſters, it is impoſſible to appoint a ſeparate miſſionary or catechiſt for the negroes of each family, and almoſt impoſſible to aſſemble thoſe of diſtant families together. The proprietors of large numbers of them are uſually well able to get them inſtructed by ſome of their upper ſervants, or a neighbouring ſchoolmaſter; and if they are unwilling, would be very apt to defeat the endeavours of perſons appointed by the Society. If ſuch in any place, as are well diſpoſed, will form any reaſonable plan for the inſtruction of the negroes belonging to them, or near them, which they may contrive much better on the ſpot, than the Society can at a diſtance, they will be ſure to receive as much help from it, as they can expect. The Society hath for many years maintained Catechiſts for the Negroes in the two great cities o New York and Philadelphia, with very good effect. And of late they have been blamed for it, as overdoing, becauſe the inhabitants may well bear the burthen themſelves. However this may be, they can truly anſwer to the Doctor's charge, that they have refuſed no aſſiſtance towards the converſion

* Page 95.

verſion of the negroes, which they have been aſked, or ſaw how to give; and particularly, that they have withdrawn none ſince the increaſe of their miſſions in New England. On the contrary, they have extended their care far beyond the literal bounds of their charter, and in 1751 appointed a very worthy miſſionary, with a ſalary of 70*l.* a-year, to inſtruct the Negroes in Africa: where he continued five years, and then returned to England on account of his health; having firſt ſent over to the Society three boys of good families, to be educated here under their direction. One of theſe is dead; the other two have been maintained, though as frugally as was proper, yet at no ſmall expence, and taught whatever would fit them to propagate Chriſtianity in their native country, to which they are now on the point of going back. The greateſt part of this the Doctor muſt have known from the abſtracts, but hath mentioned nothing of it. For it would have been hard to reconcile with his accuſation of the Society, that they have diſregarded every thing elſe, to propagate Epiſcopacy.

The laſt head of his charge of neglect relates to the colonies, unprovided of a competent number of miniſters. Here he ſaith, that *though he will not affirm it for truth, yet he hath been very credibly informed, that people in ſome of the Southern Colonies, and particularly in thoſe parts of North Carolina, which were entirely deſtitute of miniſters, had made earneſt and repeated applications to the Society for miſſionaries, ſometimes without any anſwer for years together, and at laſt without ſucceſs:* and that *ſome ſenſible and ſerious perſons from that country, ſeveral years ago, he thinks, gave him the ſame account; but that whether they did or not they made ſuch a repreſentation of their ſad ſtate, for want of miniſters, that at the moment* of his writing, *it was not in his power to refrain from tears in reflecting on it.* And then he makes his uſual charitable addition, that *perhaps* the Society *had it not in their power to comply with theſe ſolicitations, by reaſon of their large expence in the noble deſign of ſupporting and encreaſing little Epiſcopal parties, or factions,* in New England *. So the Doctor's credible information of what he will not affirm for truth, and his thinking he remembers what he is not ſure he ever heard, is produced againſt the Society, to juſtify a conjecture

* Page 97, 98.

jecture about their motive for acting as they never did act. Indeed, that the poor people, over whoſe caſe he hath wept ſo long after, would have accepted miniſters from the Society, is far from certain; nor is it likely from ſeveral parts of his book, that he would have reckoned the want of Epiſcopal miniſters any great calamity. At leaſt, I cannot learn from the books of the Society, which have been conſulted on this occaſion, that any applications, made to them from North Carolina, have been rejected or poſtponed. But it appears, that they ſent a miſſionary thither in 1703, who was diſcouraged by the inconveniencies of the climate and country, by the inteſtine feuds of the people, by the profaneneſs of many of them, and the indifference of others to all religion; that on his return they ſent two more in 1707, who after a few years were alſo wearied out; and again two in 1711, who uſed their beſt endeavours, for ſeveral years, but ſucceeded no better, and at laſt quitted the undertaking. Yet all of them were men of very good characters, as the inhabitants acknowledged. On a freſh application, a ſixth miſſionary was appointed in 1722, who died the next year, and a ſeventh in 1725, who ſeems to have deſpaired like his predeceſſors *. Then the inhabitants, I believe, were for a time left to themſelves, and very inſenſible of the unhappineſs of their condition. But gradually the Society ſupplied them a-new; and for ſome years paſt they have had more clergymen amongſt them, though at moſt perhaps but ſeven at once, than ever they had before; and therefore they have not been neglected for the ſake of Epiſcopizing New England, as the Doctor ſuggeſts. The Society hath acquainted them long ago, that if they were willing to do what they were well able towards maintaining more miſſionaries, it would be glad to aſſiſt them. But inſtead of this, they have uſed thoſe ill, in many ways, whom they have had already. Particularly, though they have made laws, both formerly and lately, for ſalaries to miniſters, they have been temporary, and inſufficient, and ill executed. And when the preſent Governor once thought he had put things on ſuch a footing that the people might maintain their own miniſters entirely, the Society could not find miniſters to ſend over to him; which Dr Mayhew himſelf will allow they would have done

* See Humphrey's, p. 128, - 143.

done readily in this caſe, if they had been able, becauſe it would have coſt them nothing. Indeed we have not perſons enough in orders to ſerve the pariſhes of England properly; and therefore it muſt be difficult to engage a ſufficient number for the plantations. But the difficulty is much greater to provide them for the Southern ones, than for New England, where many are content to come over and be ordained, provided they may return to officiate amongſt their relations and friends. And this is one conſiderable reaſon of the larger proportion of miſſions in that province, which the Doctor aſcribes entirely to a quite different cauſe.

Relying on his proofs, that the Society have miſapplied a part of the money intruſted with them, he endeavours to compute how much it is, and ſhows the ſame inclination to exaggerate in this, as in every thing. Having confuted thoſe proofs, I ſhall not follow him through the dark into the random calculations built upon them. He would have it thought that in 25 years the ſum hath amounted to 35,000*l.* *with which*, he ſaith, *forty or fifty miſſions might have been comfortably maintained amongſt the Heathens and in heatheniſh places, every year, for more than* 30 *years paſt* *. Now if fifty miſſionaries are to be paid for 32 years out of 35,000*l.* they will not have each 22*l.* a-year. And if only forty miſſionaries were to be paid out of it for only 30 years, they would have but 29*l.* a-year. The Doctor, I believe, would not undertake ſuch a miſſion with ſuch a ſalary. He ſaith, the 30*l.* a-year given to Mr Barclay was *not half a proper ſupport* for him, though he was only a young catechiſt, and had 30*l.* more from the Aſſembly of New York †. But no matter how inconſiſtent the reckonings are, provided each in its turn will bear hard on the Society.

An additional charge, brought by him, is, that the Society hath obtained contributions by ſermons, repreſenting the work in which they are engaged, to be merely the propagation of Chriſtianity, though a conſiderable part of it hath been the propagation of the Church of England; that in this they have imitated the practice of the Romiſh Society *de propaganda fide*, though the preachers before them have condemned it as unfair; that thus the Diſſenters in England have been miſled to encourage

* page 95. † page 104.

encourage deſigns againſt churches of their own communion in New England, and *ſome thouſands of Pounds* have been *drawn from them*, which have in part been applied to that purpoſe*. Now in truth, the Society have made it their buſineſs to do juſt what their preachers repreſent them to have been doing, excepting that they have not been able to do ſo much towards the converſion of the Indians and Negroes. Whilſt there were but few perſons in the Maſſachuſetts and Connecticut, deſtitute of ſuch modes of public worſhip as they could attend, few or no miſſionaries were ſent thither, and the earlier ſermons took no notice of this caſe. When they increaſed, proviſion was gradually made for them; the preachers mentioned it in general terms; the preſent Archbiſhop of Canterbury mentioned it very explicitly above twenty years ago: and at the end of the ſermons, both before and ſince, liſts of the miſſionaries, their places of reſidence and their ſalaries, with accounts of the ſtate of their ſeveral congregations, have been publiſhed annually. Surely this is far remote from fraudulent dealing. And no one, that was at all attentive to the proceedings of the Society, could be ignorant of this part of them; though Dr Mayhew thinks Biſhop Butler was, when he preached before it, which is incredible in the nature of the thing, and falſe in fact. The Popiſh Society *de propaganda* never was blamed in ſermons before ours, for ſupplying thoſe of their own communion with the means of their own worſhip; but for making it their principal employment to bring over other Chriſtians to that worſhip, which ours hath not done. And if the Diſſenters have contributed any thing conſiderable to the ſupport of our miſſionaries, they muſt be preſumed to have done it with their eyes open, and either to have choſen rather to aſſiſt Epiſcopalians in that mode of public worſhip, than let them be without any; or to have liked the general deſign of the Society ſo well, as not to be influenced by their diſlike of its management in this particular. But I believe the truth is, that the Diſſenters, at leaſt for many years paſt, have contributed little or nothing. I know not that any of them is, or lately hath been, a member and ſubſcriber, or hath made any preſent, or left any legacy to the Society. Nor have they been called upon, when the crown hath appointed collections

* Page 26,—33.

for it. But ſome, if not many of them, have taken great pains to diſſuade members of the Church of England from giving on ſuch occaſions. And though I ſhould miſtake in any of theſe points, yet, on the whole, the Society would certainly come off very well in reſpect of the Diſſenters, if they would neither do it good nor harm.

But further, probably much more money hath been given to the Society by the members in the Church of England on account of the proviſion which it hath made for the Epiſcopalians in Maſſachuſetts and Connecticut, than they would have given if it had made none. Many of thoſe amongſt us, who are zealous for the ſupport of Chriſtianity abroad, are zealous alſo, tho' in a lower degree, for the ſupport of our own church there; eſpecially in places, where, without their help, it cannot ſupport itſelf. And all ſuch will naturally be more liberal to both deſigns, when thus joined, if indeed they can be called two, than they would to one of them, if divided. Perſons are not obliged to confine the whole of their charity to that one purpoſe, which they think the beſt, but may allowably diſtribute it amongſt all which they think are good. Nor is uniting theſe two purpoſes what the Doctor would repreſent it*, preferring or equalling the peculiarities of the Church of England to the intereſts of the goſpel, any more than the yearly contribution of the Diſſenters to the keeping up of their ſmaller congregations here, is preferring or equalling their peculiarities to the intereſts of the goſpel. They think, both may be kept up by one and the ſame act, ſo do we. They contribute to maintain public worſhip amongſt their poorer brethren, without deſigning to *preſbyterianize* England; we contribute to maintain it amongſt ours, without deſigning to *epiſcopize* New England. It would be abſurd in us to charge them with the former; it is equally abſurd in them to charge us with the latter. If indeed the caſe of the Epiſcopalians in the Maſſachuſetts and Connecticut doth not, by the Charter of the Society, come under its care, bounties to them are at preſent conveyed through wrong hands. But I apprehend it doth, and think that hath been proved. At leaſt, the givers in general have all along had the opportunity of knowing

* Page 90.

ing that part of their gifts was applied to this caſe by the Society, yet they have never ſignified their diſapprobation, and therefore it hath underſtood itſelf to have been anſwering their intentions. Nothing hath been clandeſtinely kept back or diverted another way from what was profeſſed. In theſe circumſtances, the guilt of Ananias and Sapphira is very unjuſtly thrown out *in terrorem* by the Doctor *, according to the old cuſtom of his party, which I hoped had been quite laid aſide, of diſcharging miſapplied texts of ſcripture in the faces of ſuch as happened to offend them. But to return: It is very poſſible, that the deſire of ſupplying the New England Epiſcopalians with miniſters, may have produced donations of as much money to the Society, as it hath expended on thoſe miniſters; now if ſo, other parts have not ſuffered on their account. And ſhould theſe benefactors be brought to think the Society an improper channel for ſuch their bounty, or ſhould it be forbidden to employ in this manner any ſhare of what it receives, the conſequence might be, that they would withdraw a proportion of their preſent liberality, as the Society hath ſignified in a letter to the New Hampſhire miniſters, it hath good reaſon to think they would †, and eſtabliſh a ſeparate fund, by which means the condition of the Epiſcopalians might be little, if at all, worſe than before, and the Doctor farther than ever from being pleaſed. For the new managers would certainly be more zealous for promoting the intereſts of the Church of England, than the Society have been, even in his own imagination.

The Doctor ſuppoſes the Defenders of the Society's conduct to argue, that it may allowably ſupport miſſions for converting the New Englanders to Epiſcopacy, becauſe this is needful to facilitate the converſion of the Indians to Chriſtianity ‡. Now they have ſaid, and very truly, as the Charter of William and Mary doth, that bringing our own people to a *good life and orderly converſation*, is requiſite to win the neighbouring nations *to the Chriſtian faith*. They may have ſaid alſo, and very truly, that the great numbers and great variety of wild ſectaries, in our colonies, are a lamentable hindrance to the progreſs of our religion. But I queſtion, whether they

* P. 118. † See Beach's vindication or addreſs, p. 31, 32. ‡ p. 119, &c.

have ever applied either of theſe obſervations to the *New England Preſbyterians* or Congregationaliſts; and yet more, whether any one of them hath ſo much as hinted, that they muſt be made Epiſcopalians, as a ſtep towards making the heathens around them Chriſtians. At leaſt, the Biſhop of St. David's, whom alone the Doctor hath quoted, intimates no ſuch thing. And, till he produces ſome authority for the aſſertion, he muſt be underſtood to put this plea into our mouths, only as an opportunity, partly of introducing his wit, about ſeeding to convert the Scotch, the Genevans, and the Man in the moon, of which I leave him without envy in full poſſeſſion; partly of ſuggeſting in ſcripture language, that our miſſionaries, *entering into the New England ſheepfold* under this *indirect* pretence, *are thieves and robbers*. But then he is careful to ſubjoin immediately, that *he doth not mean to call them by theſe opprobrious names, or to give them any perſonal affront* *. Good man, who can ſuſpect him of it?

In all that I have hitherto ſaid, I am far from intending to affirm, that the Society hath not laid out in the Maſſachuſetts and Connecticut too large a proportion of the money put into their hands, conſidering the neceſſities of other provinces. They have a diſcretionary power within the bounds of their truſt; and whilſt they confine themſelves to thoſe bounds, the money which they receive is altogether at their free diſpoſal, and ſo far *their* own; however, the Doctor is pleaſed to cavil at that expreſſion †, when uſed very harmleſsly by Mr Apthorp. But ſtill they ought to uſe their power judiciouſly, and in that they may have failed. For what Society of men hath not? Even the Doctor's too blameleſs Societies ‡ might poſſibly exhibit ſome tincture of human frailty, if they did not warily keep their tranſactions unpubliſhed, whilſt thoſe of ours lie open to all the world. Preſſing ſolicitors are always likelier to prevail, eſpecially if they will contribute freely to the undertaking for which they are ſuitors, than thoſe who are leſs earneſt though better able. And ſuch the New England Epiſcopalians have been, compared with the inhabitants of other colonies. When the earlier applications were made by them, it could not be foreſeen whether more would follow. So one miſſion was ſettled after another, till they became

* Page 123. † page 116,—118. ‡ page 101, 134.

ſame inſenſibly numerous; and when many requeſts had been granted, it was the harder to refuſe others, for which the ſame plea could be made. Some members of the Society approved this increaſe, others thought it was going too far. And in bodies of men, whoſe opinions differ, there muſt be mutual condeſcenſions, and time allowed for one ſide to come over into the ſentiments of the other, elſe they cannot proceed together. But in the laſt five or ſix years, I believe, no new miſſion hath been appointed in the Maſſachuſetts or Connecticut, which had not been promiſed before, excepting that of Cambridge. And now for ſome time paſt, the Society have excuſed themſelves from complying with any applications from that quarter. Surely this alone is no inconſiderable argument, that proſelyting thoſe two diſtricts to Epiſcopacy hath not been the point in view.

What is paſt, as the Doctor obſerves, *cannot be recalled.* But if miſtakes have happened, they may be avoided for the future, and the Society *is not above altering its meaſures* *. Doubtleſs it would have liked, and might have expected, civiler and fairer treatment, than he hath vouchſafed to give it. But however, *fas eſt & ab hoſte doceri.* It cannot deſert and abandon the congregations which it hath taken under its protection, unleſs they ſhould become either too rich to need its aſſiſtance, or too inconſiderable to deſerve it. But more care may be uſed to know, when either of theſe things falls out. All forwardneſs in miſſionaries to moleſt perſons of other perſuaſions, and all encouragement of parties and factions in order to ſerve eccleſiaſtical ſchemes, may be ſtrictly prohibited, and on reaſonable complaint ſeverely checked. The eyes of the Society may be turned more attentively to the dark corners of the colonies, to the methods which promiſe well for the more effectual inſtruction of the negroes, and to the openings for doing good amongſt the Indians, which his Majeſty's new acquiſitions will probably diſcloſe. A friendly correſpondence may alſo be carried on between ſome of the members of that body, and ſome of the Preſbyterian or Congregational miniſters, whoſe diſpoſitions are mild and ingenuous; and thus animoſities and jealouſies may by degrees be extinguiſhed

* Page 133.

guiſhed, of which, I am perſuaded, the Society is very deſirous.

Therefore I proceed now to the laſt part of what I propoſed, taking into conſideration the ſcheme of appointing biſhops to reſide in our American colonies. The Church of England is, in its conſtitution, Epiſcopal. It is, in ſome of the plantations, confeſſedly the eſtabliſhed church; in the reſt are many congregations adhering to it; and through the late extenſion of the Britiſh Dominions, and the influence of other cauſes, it is likely that there will be more. All members of every church are, according to the principles of liberty, intitled to every part of what they conceive to be the benefits of it, entire and complete, ſo far as conſiſts with the welfare of civil government; yet the members of our church in America do not thus enjoy its benefits, having no Proteſtant Biſhop within 3000 miles of them; a caſe, which never had its parallel before in the Chriſtian world. Therefore it is deſired, that two or more Biſhops may be appointed for them, to reſide where his Majeſty ſhall think moſt convenient; that they may have no concern in the leaſt with any perſons who do not profeſs themſelves to be of the Church of England, but may ordain miniſters for ſuch as do; may confirm their children, when brought to them at a fit age for that purpoſe, and take ſuch overſight of the Epiſcopal clergy, as the Biſhop of London's Commiſſaries in thoſe parts have been empowered to take, and have taken, without offence. But it is not deſired in the leaſt that they ſhould hold courts to try matrimonial or teſtamentary cauſes, or be veſted with any authority, now exerciſed either by provincial governors or ſubordinate magiſtrates, or infringe or diminiſh any privileges and liberties enjoyed by any of the laity, even of our own communion. This is the real and only ſcheme that hath been planned for Biſhops in America; and whoever hath heard of any other, hath been miſinformed through miſtake or deſign. The American Diſſenters from our communion, would think it inſupportably grievous to have no miniſters but ſuch as received ordination in England or Ireland, or to be withheld from the uſe of any religious rite, which they eſteemed as highly as we do Confirmation; or to have their churches deſtitute of a ſuperintendency, which they conceived to be of apoſtolical inſtitution,

tution. I ſhould, in ſuch a caſe, be a zealous advocate for them, as not yet enjoying the full toleration to which they had a right. And ſurely they ought to aſk their conſciences very ſeriouſly, why they oppoſe our application for ſuch indulgence as they would claim for themſelves; and whether indeed ſuch oppoſition is not downright perſecution, and that in a matter merely ſpiritual, without the mixture of any mporal concern.

The Doctor is a great deal too vehement to propoſe his objections diſtinctly, therefore I will endeavour to do it for him. He ſaith, *the ſtate of religion is much better amongſt thoſe of his communion in America, than it is even in England, under the immediate eye and documents of the venerable Biſhops* *; and that *ſhould any be ſent thither, it is to be hoped they will have better ſucceſs than the Biſhops have hitherto had here* †. Now certainly, the ſtate of religion here is far from being what we have cauſe to wiſh it were. Whether it be worſe than in New England, I am unable to pronounce; but ſuppoſing it to be ſo, the Doctor himſelf ſaith, that *a rationale might be given of the fact, without any reflection on our church* ‡. And the queſtion, relative to the preſent point, is not, where the ſtate of religion is beſt, but whether it will not be better amongſt the American Epiſcopalians, if they have Biſhops to ſuperintend their Clergy, and do the other offices belonging to that function, than if they have none. He calls church government by biſhops, *the yoke of Epiſcopal bondage* §. And certainly bondage is a dreadful evil, and religious the worſt of all. But what yoke of bondage do either Churchmen or Diſſenters ſuffer in England, where Biſhops have been ſo long? All church authority was formerly too heavy; but ſurely the Epiſcopal now is as moderate as any, and it is propoſed to be reduced yet lower in America, and Diſſenters will be no way ſubject to it. He ſaith, *the affair of Biſhops hath lately been, and probably now is, in agitation in England; and the Society ſpare neither endeavours, applications, nor expence, in order to effect their grand deſign of Epiſcopizing all New England, as well as the other colonies* ‖. Now moſt of the colonies were originally Epiſcopal. And I cannot learn, nor I believe will the Doctor affirm, that the inhabitants of any of them, be they of what ſect

* p. 39. † p. 40. ‡ p. 39. § p. 146. ‖ p. 89.

fect they will, groan under that burthen, or have reaſon to do ſo. The imagination of a deſign to Epiſcopize the reſt, I have ſhown to be altogether groundleſs. But further, they may be Epiſcopized without ſending Biſhops amongſt them; and biſhops may be ſent amongſt them, without any intention of epiſcopizing them.

Dean Kennet, confeſſed to be a worthy man *, writing to Dr Colman in 1712, concerning the Society's *deſire to leave Biſhops ſettled in the foreign parts committed to his care*, ſaith, as Dr Mayhew himſelf quotes him, *I hope your churches would not be jealous of it* †. Certainly therefore, he did not know any cauſe why they ſhould be jealous of it. Archbiſhop Tenniſon, who, though a very good Churchman, is allowed to have meant no harm to any Diſſenters any where, left by his will 1000*l.* to encourage the appointment of two Biſhops, one on the Continent, and another in the Iſlands of America. Biſhop Butler, whom the Doctor praiſes ſo highly and ſo juſtly, was a hearty friend to this ſcheme, and left 500*l.* to the Society. Biſhop Benſon, whoſe Chriſtian and catholic temper is well known to almoſt as many as ever heard his name, bequeathed to it ſuch a legacy as he was able, *to be added to the fund for ſettling Biſhops in our plantations in America, hoping* [theſe are his own words] *that a deſign, ſo neceſſary and unexceptionable, cannot but at laſt be put in execution.*

The Doctor profeſſes himſelf an enemy to it, becauſe *of the narrow, cenſorious, and bitter ſpirit that prevails in too many of the Epiſcopalians in America* ‡. But may not he think too ill of their ſpirit? I verily believe he doth. Or if he doth not, is there not an equal ſhare of the ſame ſpirit in too many of the Preſbyterians and Congregationaliſts there? And are invectives and acts of unkindneſs the way to mend it on either ſide? Or may not the appointment of proper Biſhops, conduce greatly to mend it on the ſide of the Epiſcopalians? But he fears, that *if this growing party ſhould get a major vote in the houſes of Aſſembly, teſts might be obtained to exclude all but Conformiſts from poſts of honour and emolument, and all men be taxed for the ſupport of Biſhops and their underlings; and therefore he cannot think of the Church of England's gaining ground there to any great degree, and eſpecially of ſeeing Biſhops fixed upon*

* page 53. † p. 88. ‡ p. 129.

upon them, without great reluctance *. Now this very paſſage implies it not to have gained ground, as yet, to any great degree: in another, already quoted, he ſcarcely ſeems to think it grows at all; and in a third, though he falſely ſuppoſes the promotion of it to be a *favourite point*, purſued *at a vaſt expence*, he ſtill *hopes in God it will never be carried* †. The likelihood therefore of its obtaining a majority, is by no means conſiderable. Now if it were, would excluding Biſhops be any mighty guard againſt it? So that either the admiſſion of them will be very ſafe, or the Doctor muſt think of more vigorous meaſures than have hitherto been uſed, to prevent the increaſe of this malignant faction. But ſuppoſing the Epiſcopalians were the majority there, why ſhould a teſt law follow? Is there any ſuch law in the Epiſcopalian colonies? Or even though there were, can it be imagined, that if a prevailing party in New England were wild enough to propoſe, his Majeſty would ever be adviſed to paſs one for that country? The terror of being taxed for biſhops and their underlings, as he civilly calls the body of the clergy, is yet more chimerical than the former; as an act for that purpoſe would affect a much greater number of perſons, and in a ſtill tenderer point. Tithes are paid in England to the clergy by virtue of grants, which laid that burthen upon eſtates many ages before the preſent poſſeſſors enjoyed them. But could an act of Parliament be obtained now to impoſe a tax never known before, of this or the like nature, on this whole nation, Diſſenters not excepted, for the maintenance of an eccleſiaſtical hierarchy? No body will pretend it could. And with what modeſty then can the Doctor ſuggeſt, that ſuch a thing might be feared in New England? Beſides, would it have been a good reaſon at the Revolution, for debarring the Diſſenters from the full exerciſe of their church government and worſhip, that, if they obtained it, they might perhaps increaſe till they got a *major vote* in both houſes, and then might enact no mortal knows what?

But indeed the poor man's fears, if you will believe him, run to vaſtly further lengths yet. He imagines already himſelf and his brethren driven to the laſt extremities by theſe ſavage Epiſcopalians, and vents his lamentations in ſuch moving ſtrains, that I muſt tranſcribe them; for they are the

* page 129. † page 90.

purpoſes they think fit; and theſe aſſemblies give us no manner brage. What we deſire with reſpect to New England, is much leſs: that a Biſhop may not reſide there, but reſort thither from time to time, to officiate amongſt thoſe of our own communion. His conſtant abode will be in whatever province is willing to receive him, with his Majeſty's approbation: who will certainly, for reaſons of every kind, ſend ſuch perſons in this character, as are leaſt likely to cauſe uneaſineſs. Surely the Doctor and his friends cannot thwart a ſcheme of this nature, and call themſelves patrons of religious liberty.

It is poſſible, though it is ſtrange, that when he wrote his *obſervations*, he might miſunderſtand the Society's intention, both in ſending miſſionaries to New England and deſiring American Biſhops. I hope it is now ſufficiently cleared up; and if he is ſtill diſſatisfied, I entreat him to conſider, for all men ought, *what manner of ſpirit he is of**. He hath very good abilities, and a zeal that would be highly commendable, if it were duly tempered with charity. But he ſeems to have naturally a moſt vehement ſpirit, and to have imbibed, perhaps in his early days, equally vehement prepoſſeſſions againſt the very name of Biſhops, and every thing connected with them. I am ſenſible that theſe things plead in his excuſe: for they have often hurried men, who on the whole meant well, not only into great unfairneſs of arguing, but far worſe faults. And though I have made uſe of ſome freedom in ſetting forth his miſtakes and partialities, yet if ſuch treatment, as he hath given Mr Apthorp, was deſigned for *the benevolent end of ſhewing him to himſelf*†, ſurely my treatment of him will not be imputed to any unkinder motive. If he amends upon admonition, he will deſerve much reſpect; if not, much pity.

But however he may take what I have written, I hope others, particularly the Diſſenters, both Engliſh and American, as many as happen to ſee it, will conſider it calmly: and neither indulge fears without foundation, nor affect fears which they have not, in order to hinder their Epiſcopal brethren from enjoying what they have a right to. Our inclination is to live in friendſhip with all the Proteſtant churches. We aſſiſt and protect thoſe on the Continent of Europe as well as we are able. We ſhow our regard to that of Scotland as often

* Luke ix. 55. † page 145.

ten as we have an opportunity, and believe the members of it are ſenſible that we do. To thoſe who differ from us in this part of the kingdom, we neither attempt nor wiſh any injury. And we ſhall gladly give proofs to every denomination of Chriſtians in our colonies, that we are friends to a toleration even of the moſt intolerant, as far as it is ſafe; and willing that all mankind ſhould poſſeſs all the advantages, religious and civil, when they can demand either in law or reaſon. But with thoſe, who approach nearer to us in purity of faith, and brotherly love, we are deſirous to cultivate a freer communication, paſſing over all former diſguſts, as we beg that they would. If we give them any ſeeming cauſe of complaint, we hope they will ſignify it in the moſt amicable manner. If they publiſh it, we hope they will preſerve fairneſs and temper. If they fail in either, we muſt bear it with patience, but be excuſed from replying. If any writers on our ſide have been leſs cool, or leſs civil, than they ought and deſigned to have been, we are ſorry for it, and exhort them to change their ſtile, if they write again. For it is the duty of all men, how much ſoever they differ in opinion, to agree in mutual good will and kind behaviour.

A LET-

A

LETTER

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HORATIO WALPOLE, Esq.

Written Jan. 9. 1750-1.

CONCERNING

BISHOPS IN AMERICA.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Letter was found among the papers of the late Archbiſhop Secker. It was written in conſequence of a letter, dated May 9. 1750, from the late Lord Walpole, to the late Dr Sherlock, Biſhop of London; which was communicated by the latter to Biſhop Secker, Jan. 2. 1750-1.

It is now printed in obedience to an order left with it under his Grace's own hand, (dated May 25. 1759) in theſe words:

Let the Letter, written by me to Mr Walpole, *concerning Biſhops in America, be printed after my death.*

THO. CANT.

A

LETTER

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HORATIO WALPOLE, Eſq.

St James's Weſtminſter, July 9. 1750-51.

SIR,

I Return you my humble thanks for the honour you have done me, in communicating to me your Letter to the Biſhop of London. I have read it with all that attention and regard, which is ſo juſtly due to your ſuperior abilities, and long experience, and meritorious zeal for our preſent happy eſtabliſhment, and the public welfare. But ſtill I cannot ſee the ſcheme, to which it relates, in the ſame light that you do. And though, if ever he hath converſed with you on the ſubject ſince, he hath doubtleſs ſaid every thing material by way of reply, which I can ſuggeſt, and much more; yet as he doth not ſeem to have laid any thing further before you in writing, I beg leave to trouble you with what hath occurred to me: which, as the ſeſſion is not yet begun, you may poſſibly have ſome leiſure to look upon.

The thing propoſed is, that two or three perſons ſhould be ordained Biſhops, and ſent into our American colonies, to adminiſter Confirmation, and give Deacons and Prieſts orders to proper candidates, and exerciſe ſuch juriſdiction over the cler-

gy of the Church of England in thoſe parts, as the late Biſhop of London's commiſſaries did, or ſuch as it might be thought proper that any future commiſſaries ſhould, if this deſign were not to take place. The queſtions, that ariſe on this propoſal, are: Is it a reaſonable one in itſelf? And if it be, are there any ſuch dangers of its being extended to introduce exorbitant church powers, or of its raiſing uneaſineſſes abroad or at home, as may notwithſtanding, at leaſt for the preſent, be juſt objections againſt it?

The reaſonableneſs of the propoſal, abſtractedly conſidered, you ſeem, ſir, to admit. And indeed it belongs to the very nature of Epiſcopal churches, to have Biſhops at proper diſtances, preſiding over them. Nor was there ever before, I believe, in the Chriſtian world, an inſtance of ſuch a number of ſuch churches, or a tenth part of that number, with no Biſhop amongſt them, or within ſome thouſands of miles from them. But the conſideration of the Epiſcopal acts which are requiſite, will prove the need of Epiſcopal reſidence more fully. Confirmation is an office of our church, derived from the primitive ages; and, when adminiſtered with due care, a very uſeful one. All our people in America ſee the appointment of it in their prayer-books, immediately after their catechiſm. And if they are denied it, unleſs they will come over to England for it; they are in effect prohibited the exerciſe of one part of their religion. Again, if they are to have no ordinations there, they muſt either ſend perſons hither to be ordained, or take ſuch as come to them from hence. Sending their ſons to ſo diſtant a country, and ſo different a climate, muſt be very inconvenient and diſagreeable: and taking the ſmall pox here is ſaid to be peculiarly fatal to them. The expence alſo muſt be grievous to perſons of ſmall fortunes; ſuch as moſt are, who breed up their children for orders: yet not ſufficient to bring any acceſſion of wealth to this nation, that would be worth naming, were more of that rank to come. But in fact, very few of them do. Therefore they muſt be ſupplied chiefly from hence. And not many in proportion will go from hence, but perſons of deſperate fortunes, low qualifications, and bad or doubtful characters: who cannot anſwer, as they ought, the end for which they are deſigned. And it deſerves obſervation, that a great part of them are Scotch. I need not ſay

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what chance there is that Episcopal clergymen of that country may be disaffected to the government. Now, if instead of such, natives of the plantations were bred in their colleges, with a view to orders; notwithstanding which, their young men of fashion would still come to England for polite accomplishments; this would afford convenient opportunities to parents of providing for some of their children handsomely, and encouragement to the inhabitants to build and endow churches, to furnish parsonage-houses, and stock glebes, which now run to ruin for want of it. And clergymen whose families were known, would be more respected, and have a better influence than vagabond strangers. As to the matter of discipline and jurisdiction over the clergy, it would stand just as it hath done hitherto, only with this difference, that the exhortations and directions of a person invested with the Episcopal character, would be more readily and carefully observed by the parish ministers, than those are which proceed from their equals: and misbehaviours might thus be more effectually prevented, than they can afterwards be punished and rectified. Nor is this a point of consequence only to themselves and their hearers, but to the public; as the behaviour of the clergy in general is. And if by reforming them, and introducing better order into the churches of our communion, more of the inhabitants should come over to it, as they naturally will, this would be a further public benefit. For members of the Church of England will think themselves more connected with England than others. And supposing them not to be Jacobites, their acknowledgment of the King's supremacy will incline them to be dutifuller subjects than the Dissenters, who do not acknowledge it.

But allowing the establishment of Bishops in America to be reasonable in itself, the second question is, Whether the danger of increasing church power by means of such an establishment, be not a sufficient objection against it. Now against things evidently right and useful, no dangers ought to be pleaded, but such as are both very probable and great; and from confirming and ordaining, no danger of this kind, I presume, is apprehended. Yet these are the only new powers that will be exercised. No other jurisdiction is desired, for the proposed bishops than the preceding commissaries have enjoyed; and even

that, on this occaſion, may be aſcertained and limited more accurately, if it be requiſite. But here it is aſked, How any perſons can undertake to promiſe, that no additional powers ſhall hereafter be propoſed and preſſed on the colonies, when Biſhops have once been ſettled? And ſtrictly ſpeaking, indeed, nothing of this nature can ever be promiſed in any caſe. But if the Diſſenters had been aſked, on their applying for a toleration, how they could undertake to promiſe, that when that point was once ſettled, nothing further, nothing hurtful to the eſtabliſhed church, ſhould ever be propoſed and preſſed on the government by them, ſurely this would not have been ſufficient to defeat their application. And yet, what could they have anſwered? Not more, if ſo much, as can be anſwered in the preſent caſe: that no ſuch thing is at all intended; and that though it were, there would be no danger, either of the intention taking effect, or cauſing any diſturbance.

But on the former of theſe aſſertions our ſincerity may be queſtioned. For it is argued, that Biſhops doubtleſs think the powers, which they have in this nation, to be ſtrictly juſt and reaſonable; and conſequently muſt be deſirous of their taking place in the colonies. Now, for my own part, and I believe my brethren in general are of the ſame mind, I have no imagination that Biſhops are intitled to, or that it would be right to give them, every where, the ſame powers, and privileges, that we happen, by the particular conſtitution of this country to poſſeſs here. Several parts of that conſtitution might perhaps full as well have been formed otherwiſe. Whether our ſhare of it might or not, I have never ſet myſelf to conſider; I hope, and am perſuaded, it is on the whole as harmleſs and uſeful a branch, as many others; and I endeavour, ſo far as I am concerned, to make it ſo. But were I to live where biſhops were only on the ſame footing, on which it is now propoſed they ſhould be in our plantations, I ſhould no more attempt to raiſe them higher, than I ſhould to overturn the eſtabliſhed form of government in any other reſpect. It may indeed be prudent to ſuſpect clergymen, miniſters of ſtate, all men, to ſome degree. But it cannot be prudent to refuſe doing things that are highly proper, on account of little more than a poſſibility, that an improper uſe of them may be hereafter attempted. Some Biſhops may be thought peculiarly fond of

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church power, and it concerns them when they are called upon, to defend themselves if they can. But at least I hope we are not all so fond of it, as to be aiming at that point now, though we solemnly profess we are not. Yet I believe there scarce is, or ever was a Bishop of the Church of England, from the Revolution to this day, that hath not desired the establishment of bishops in our colonies. Archbishop Tennison, who was surely no High-churchman, left by his will 1000*l.* towards it. And many more, of the greatest eminence, both dead and living, might be named, who were and are zealous for it: and yet have always been applauded by one party, and censured by the other, for their moderation. Or if bishops, as such, must of course be deemed partial, the Society for propagating the gospel consists partly also of inferior clergymen, partly too of laymen. Now the last cannot so well be suspected of designing to advance ecclesiastical authority. Yet this whole body of men, almost ever since it was in being, hath been making repeated applications for bishops in America; nor have the lay part of it ever refused to concur in them.

But though some, or many of the advocates for this proposal, were inclined to serve wrong purposes by it, is there any likelihood of its effecting those purposes? Some have apprehended just the contrary, that it will tend to the depression of the hierarchy; as it will afford the laity here an example of English Bishops abroad, with no other than spiritual powers: which may tempt them to think of reducing us at home to the same condition. But I should be very willing, for the benefit of those of our communion in the colonies, to run a greater risque, than I conceive this to be. For the fact is so notorious, that all our temporal powers and privileges are merely concessions from the state; and the act of parliament for the suffragan Bishops, under which several were made in the last century, and others may now, exemplifies so fully the possibility of bishops without peerages, and consistory courts; that we need have no fear of any new discovery to our prejudice, from appointing a few such bishops in America. But then the opposite fear, of their growing up to what we are, would it be ever so great an evil if it were to happen, seems as unlikely to happen, as most things. I do not wonder indeed, that persons who were in public stations at the latter end of Queen

Anne's,

Anne's, and the beginning of the late King's reign, ſhould have ſtrong impreſſions remaining in their minds of the terrors of eccleſiaſtical influence, which was then ſo groſsly abuſed to ſuch wicked purpoſes. But whoever attends to the preſent ſtate of things in this reſpect, muſt ſee that there hath been a prodigious change within the laſt thirty years. Though too many both of the clergy and the laity are diſaffected to the government on one account or another; yet of the former, even the lower part are not near ſo generally poſſeſſed of the wild High-Church notions, as they were. Nor was a time ever known, when the upper part were ſo univerſally free from them. And yet it is the upper part only, that can do the leaſt towards ſupporting any exorbitant pretenſions of biſhops in the colonies. Then as to the laity, I hope and believe the adminiſtration and their friends will ſhow countenance to the clergy, as far as it is neceſſary; but there is viſibly no danger of their giving them any encouragement, that may be hurtful. Amongſt the oppoſers of the adminiſtration, few, if any, are at all more prejudiced in their favour. And that regard, which the bulk of the people had for religion and the teachers of it, is greatly diminiſhed, and diminiſhing daily, to a degree, which I wonder wiſe men are not alarmed at. For it is as important, even in a political view, that they ſhould be able to do good, as that they ſhould not be able to do harm. Nor do I find, that bigotry to the church prevails amongſt the members of it in our colonies; or that there is any chance of their making afterwards imprudent additions to the authority with which their biſhops will come to them at firſt. On the contrary, one plea againſt the preſent ſcheme is, that biſhops, even with the loweſt powers, will give them jealouſy and offence. Now theſe two oppoſite dangers cannot both be conſiderable; and I apprehend neither of them is: but ſurely the former is the leſs of the two. The Biſhop of London's commiſſaries, I believe, have gained no acceſſions to what was granted them originally. And biſhops will be ſtill more narrowly watched by the governors, by other ſects, by the laity, and even the clergy, of their own communion. Nor will they have a greater dread of any thing, if either ſo good or ſo diſcreet men are choſen, as I promiſe myſelf will, than of loſing all, by graſping at what doth not belong to them.

Nor

Nor will their patrons here attempt to defend them, in what they cannot but know will ruin them, as they will be appointed by the crown, which, unleſs I miſtake, the commiſſaries are not; they will be ſuch perſons, as the crown can beſt confide in. And if it be thought neceſſary, a right of recalling them may be reſerved to the King. Whereas I believe he hath not a right of ordering the Biſhop of London to recall his commiſſaries. Upon the whole, if the preſent diſpoſition of his Majeſty's miniſters and ſubjects, in relation to eccleſiaſtical authority, continues the ſame, as in all likelihood it will, there can be no danger from biſhops in America. And if that diſpoſition ſhould alter back to what it formerly hath been, which God forbid, they will be eſtabliſhed with greater powers, than are now deſired for them.

It ought to be conſidered farther, that an act of the laſt ſeſſion of parliament, which paſſed without any oppoſition from any body, hath expreſsly eſtabliſhed Moravian Biſhops in America; who have much higher and ſtricter notions of church government and diſcipline than we have. Why then ſhould there be ſuch fear of eſtabliſhing Biſhops of the Church of England? If for want of theſe, the Moravian Biſhops ſhould ordain ſuch miniſters for our people as they thought proper; or ſhould they, by adminiſtering Confirmation, or by the reverence of their Epiſcopal character, be continually gaining converts from us; it would be a very undeſirable thing on ſeveral accounts; particularly on this, that moſt of them refuſe taking oaths, and bearing arms. Beſides, there have been Nonjuring Jacobite Biſhops in our colonies, not very long ſince, if there are none now. And Popiſh ones alſo, I apprehend have recourſe to them from time to time. At leaſt the Biſhop of Quebec hath no ſmall influence in a very important new ſettlement of ours. May not then the neglect of having biſhops of our own, expoſe us to far greater dangers, than the appointment of them can?

But ſtill the third queſtion remains, and is a very material one, whether ſuch an appointment, however harmleſs and uſeful it might be otherwiſe, would not ſtir up dangerous uneaſineſſes abroad or at home? And here it is aſked, if the members of our church in America would like to have biſhops among them, why have they never petitioned for them? Now, ſurely

ſurely their omitting it may well be aſcribed, in part, to the thoughtleſſneſs of mankind about their religious concerns; which hath been ſo peculiarly great in thoſe countries, that ſome of them did not petition for help, when they had no one office of Chriſtianity adminiſtered to them; and partly alſo to this, that probably too many of their clergy think, they may both live more negligently, and have a better chance for preferment now, than if a Biſhop were to inſpect them, and ordain natives to be their rivals. But the chief reaſon, I doubt not, is, that the inhabitants of the colonies, living at ſuch a diſtance, and not knowing when an application to the government might be ſeaſonable; and being aſſured, that the biſhops here, eſpecially the Biſhop of London, and the Society for propagating the goſpel, would always be attentive to this point, have left it to them. And they to whom it is thus left, have received abundant proofs, that very great numbers of the laity of the Church of England in thoſe countries, of higher as well as lower rank, earneſtly deſire to have biſhops ſettled there, and think it would be a moſt valuable public benefit. Nor have they found cauſe to imagine that any oppoſition would be made to it from that quarter. Indeed, of courſe it ſhould be preſumed, and none but the very ſtrongeſt evidence admitted to the contrary, that all perſons deſire to have within their reach, the means of exerciſing their religion completely: which thoſe of our communion in America, and they alone of all his Majeſty's ſubjects, have not. It is true, ſome of them have provided againſt enlarging the juriſdiction of the commiſſaries: but none of them have expreſſed any public reluctance to the appointment of biſhops. I have learned from ſome papers of Biſhop Gibſon, that there was a deſign in Charles the Second's time, to place one in Virginia; that letters patent for that purpoſe are ſtill extant; and that no other reaſon appears, why the deſign failed, but that the whole endowment was to have been out of the cuſtoms: whereas now it is not intended either to burthen the crown, or tax the ſubject. Nor can either be done hereafter but by conſent of both. Nor is it apprehended, that either will be needful. Some conſiderable gifts have been already contributed: and probably more will, when the ſcheme appears likely to take effect. There are likewiſe other methods that might be propoſed.

And

And if they who are againſt it, think it will miſcarry for want of a maintenance for the Biſhops, they need not take the trouble of oppoſing it. But to go on. For above forty years paſt, the inhabitants there muſt have had frequent notices, by various ways, that ſuch a deſign was in agitation: yet I have not heard, that any of them, who are members of our church, have ever ſignified the leaſt diſlike of it. Of late indeed, the Preſbyterians or Independants of New England have. But they cannot be intitled to object againſt placing biſhops in any other province, but their own, in which there never was any thought of placing them. Whether they would object againſt biſhops coming to officiate occaſionally amongſt thoſe of the Epiſcopal perſuaſion in that province, I know not. If they ſhould, and perſiſt in it, that may be omitted. But it ſeems hardly poſſible that they ſhould, unleſs the groſs miſrepreſentations, that have been ſo officiouſly ſent them from hence have made them deaf to all reaſon. It is true, they fled into America from the oppreſſions of eccleſiaſtical power, exerciſed by biſhops. But they cannot fail to know how much that power hath been long ſince leſſened; and the inclinations and the principles of thoſe who are intruſted with it, altered for the better. If they were here at preſent, they would not think of flying from it. Why then ſhould they be afraid of biſhops reſorting to their country now and then, without any pretence of authority over them, but merely to perform ſome religious acts in a few congregations of Epiſcopal people, that are intermixed with them? This is no more than Diſſenting miniſters do here by law, and even Popiſh prieſts and biſhops by connivance.

But at leaſt, before any argument againſt the ſcheme can be drawn from the opinion of any of the colonies, it ought to be fairly ſtated to them. This was the ſole intention of the Society for propagating the goſpel, in their late order for ſending letters into America. They apprehended they might take the liberty of tranſmitting a true account of the deſign, when others had taken that of tranſmitting a falſe one; and, that endeavouring to procure evidence in relation to ſo material a point in their cauſe, againſt the time it would come to be tried, was not blameable. However, if they judged ill in attempting it, his Majeſty's equity, and that of his council, may

doubtleſs be depended on, that they will not reject this propoſal, as diſagreeable to the colonies, till a fair inquiry ſhows, whether it be ſo or not.

But a farther objection againſt it is, That however itmay be received there, it will immediately raiſe animoſities here; produce declamations in pulpits, controverſies in pamphlets, debates in parliament; revive the diſtinction of high and low among churchmen, and terrify or provoke the Diſſenters. Now amongſt the clergy, I conceive it can make no diſpute: for every man of character amongſt them, doth and muſt wiſh it ſucceſs. If indeed it were to be brought upon the carpet, and the adminiſtration were to oppoſe it, ſome clergymen might be tempted to ſay indecent things of them. But the preſent queſtion is not, whether this affair ought to be attempted, *if*, after being fully weighed, it be diſapproved by the miniſtry: that undoubtedly would be very wrong: but whether there be reaſon for them to diſapprove it. And certainly there is no reaſon to fear inflaming and exaſperating the clergy, by declaring for it: on the contrary, ſcarce any thing would pleaſe them more univerſally. Nor, I preſume, is the danger from pamphlets to be thought very great: for moſt virulent ones are publiſhed daily both againſt church and ſtate, which yet give the government no terror at all. Conteſts in parliament indeed would be a matter of more ſerious concern. But there ſeems no neceſſity that this affair ſhould ever come into parliament. For, as the law now ſtands, ſuffragan Biſhops may be ordained with the King's approbation; and the Biſhop of London may ſend thoſe, inſtead of preſbyters, for his commiſſaries; and they may confirm and ordain, as well as exerciſe the juriſdiction which hath been uſual there. But, even if the ſcheme ſhould be brought into parliament, it can be oppoſed only on theſe two principles: that Epiſcopal power is a great grievance in this nation, and that it muſt riſe to an equal height, wherever biſhops are: of which two propoſitions, plain experience proves the former to be falſe; and I hope I have proved the latter to be ſo. Still ſome members may be blinded by ill-will to the eccleſiaſtical part of our conſtitution. But ſurely theſe are not very many. Beſides, the adminiſtration will eaſily quiet ſuch of them as are their friends. Then the Tories muſt be for biſhops, if it be only to preſerve their own

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credit. And the remainder will probably find themſelves too inconſiderable to ſtir.

Therefore the only danger left, is that of alarming and provoking the body of the Diſſenters. Now a few buſy warm men, are not the body of the Diſſenters. And though they may affect to ſpeak in the name of the whole, yet the whole will neither think it right nor prudent to do all that theſe gentlemen are pleaſed to intimate: ſome of whom alſo, after arguing properly with them, have owned, that they had little or nothing to object againſt appointing biſhops in plantations of the Epiſcopal communion. Dr Avery, if I am rightly informed, hath acknowledged this to the Archbiſhop, as Mr Chandler hath to me. And indeed there is no modeſty, in ſaying, we who are not of the eſtabliſhed church, demand, as a matter of ſtrict juſtice, the full exerciſe of our religion here: but at the ſame time inſiſt, that the King's Epiſcopal ſubjects in America, with whom we have nothing at all to do, ſhall not, even in thoſe provinces where they are the eſtabliſhed church, have the full exerciſe of theirs. Suppoſe the Preſbyterians, or Independants in America thought as well of Confirmation as we do, and had not amongſt them, a proper officer to adminiſter it; would not they think it inſufferable to be denied ſuch a one, and put under a neceſſity of ſending their children hither for it, if they would have it? Suppoſing they were obliged only to ſend their candidates for the miniſtry, hither to be ordained; would they have been patient under it as long as we have been? Would they not have cried out loudly and inceſſantly for relief? For my part, I ſhould have thought them ſo well entitled to it, as to have been a moſt hearty and zealous advocate for them. It is not merely from my attachment to the Church of England, that I am a favourer of the ſcheme in queſtion: but from my love of religious liberty; which, in this point, the members of the Church of England in our colonies do not enjoy. And I cannot imagine how the Diſſenters can pretend to be lovers of it, and wiſh it to be withheld from their fellow-ſubjects. God forbid that we ſhould ever be moved, by this or any other provocation, to wiſh it withheld in any inſtance whatever from the Diſſenters. And I believe there never was a time, when the clergy of this land were in ſo mild a diſpoſition towards them. What-

ever they may plead therefore, it is not fear that induces them to oppoſe us on this occaſion; for they well know that we have neither power nor wiſh to oppreſs them, or their brethren, in any way. But it is a wantonneſs of ſpirit, which we have not deſerved from them. It is an oſtentatious fondneſs of uſing their influence with great perſons, to grieve us, without ſerving themſelves. And inſtead of being ſtirred up by their friends abroad to what they do, their friends abroad have been ſtirred up by them. Now this is a ſort of behaviour which an adminiſtration had much better check by due admonitions, than encourage its growth: for how far it may grow, they cannot foreſee. The Diſſenters are ſincere well-wiſhers to the civil part of our preſent happy eſtabliſhment; and they are to be eſteemed and loved for it: but not to be gratified at the expence of thoſe, who ſincerely wiſh well to both parts. I am heartily ſorry, that all the members of our church are not loyal and dutiful ſubjects to the King: but much the greater part of them are; the biſhops and upper clergy in particular: and ſurely their deſires merit as kind a regard in this caſe, as thoſe of the Diſſenters and their leaders. We indeed do not threaten if we are diſregarded. But they have no more right to threaten than we: nor need they be feared, if they do. Their threatnings have been very ſafely ſlighted in a point which they have much at heart, I mean the Teſt: and ſo they may in this.

Permit me to add, that were thoſe of our communion, who are unhappily and unjuſtly prejudiced, either againſt the King or his miniſters, worſe, in either of theſe reſpects, than they are, ſtill the endeavour ſhould be to make them better in both: for till that is done, our domeſtic affairs will never be on a firm and eaſy footing. Not that any thing wrong or hazardous ſhould be done to reconcile them; but every thing that is right and harmleſs. Indeed ſuch inſtances of kindneſs, when ſhown them, I am grieved to ſay it, have not produced, and probably will not produce ſo great, and much leſs ſo ſpeedy returns as they ought; but ſome good effect they muſt produce; and perſeverance in a due regimen will at length complete the cure. On the other hand, I apprehend, the rejection of this propoſal will do the government by far more hurt amongſt the Churchmen, than it can poſſibly do them good amongſt

mongſt the Diſſenters. When the Biſhops are aſked about it, as they frequently are, by their clergy and others, what muſt they anſwer? We cannot with truth expreſs diſapprobation of it, or indifference to it. And if we did, we ſhould be thought unworthy of our ſtations. Muſt we then be forced to ſay, that we are all ſatisfied of the abſolute fitneſs, the great advantages, the perfect ſafety of the thing, and have repeatedly preſſed for it, but cannot prevail? Would not this both ſadly diminiſh our ability of ſerving the government, by ſhowing how little credit we have with it; make very undeſirable impreſſions on many minds concerning the King, and thoſe that are in authority under him; as incapable of being won by the arguments or entreaties of thoſe, who have ſo ſtrong a zeal for them, to do an innocent favour to the church? Still, if we cannot ſucceed by reſpectful applications, I know it is our duty to make the beſt of the matter, and not diſturb the public welfare, becauſe in this particular we are unable to promote it. I would ſpeak as gently of the affair as ever I could, where there was danger of doing harm: though I ſpeak ſo earneſtly, where I would fain hope to do good. But no mildneſs or prudence will wholly or nearly prevent the above-mentioned conſequences.

I am ſenſible it may be argued, after all, that the failure of ſo many attempts on behalf of this ſcheme is preſumption more than enough of their being ſome inſuperable objection againſt it. But there cannot well be any other objection, than ſuch as are known, and have been produced on the preſent occaſion. And if thoſe have been ſufficiently anſwered, we are not to yield up our own underſtandings implicitly to the judgements of other perſons in times paſt: eſpecially as thoſe judgements differ. For ſome great men have continued as ſteadily to approve of biſhops in America, as others to diſapprove of them. And poſſibly the reaſons of the latter may, in part at leaſt, have been only temporary, or they may have had too little ſerious attention to religious matters; or more fear, than they needed, of bringing difficulties on themſelves by engaging in them. But whether any of theſe things be ſo or not, in general it is certain, that many deſigns have been long fruſtrated, or poſtponed, on one account or other,

which

which at length have been executed, and found beneficial.

I beg your pardon, ſir, for being thus prolix: but I have gone through each head as briefly as I could: and ſhould you think me ever ſo much miſtaken, you will do me but ſtrict juſtice in believing me to mean well; and to be, with the greateſt reſpect, and the moſt grateful ſenſe of your obliging treatment of me,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient

Humble Servant,

THO. OKFORD.

FINIS.

JAN 3 1918